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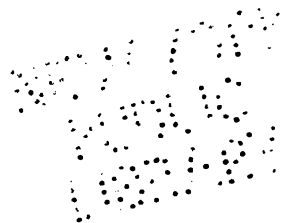


John Inglesant

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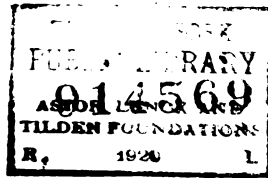
*Ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα Θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ
οὕτω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα.*

VOLUME II



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CHAPTER XIII

WHEN the news of the arrest of the Earl of Glamorgan reached Oxford, it caused the greatest consternation, and the King wrote letters in his own name and in that of the Chancellor, to the Parliament, and to all the principal politicians, denying all participation in or knowledge of his negotiations.

The most violent excitement prevailed on the subject all over England. All parties, except the Papists, joined in expressing the most lively horror and indignation at proposals which not only repudiated the policy of the last hundred years, and let loose the Papists to pursue their course unimpeded, but also placed England at the mercy of the most repulsive and lawless of the followers of the Roman Catholic faith. The barbarities of the Irish rebels, which were sufficiently horrible, were magnified by rumour on every side ; and the horror which the English conceived at the thought of their homes being laid open to those monsters, was only equalled

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by their indignation against those who had conceived so treasonable and unnatural a plot. Besides this, the King having denied all knowledge of such negotiations, the indignation of all loyal Churchmen was excited against those who had so treasonably and miserably done all they could to compromise the King's name, and make him odious to all right-thinking Englishmen. The known actors in this affair being very few, consisting, indeed, only of the Earl and Inglesant, and of the Jesuits (which last was a vague and intangible designation, standing in the ordinary English mind merely as a synonym for all that was wicked, base, and dangerous), and the Earl being, moreover, out of reach, the public indignation concentrated on Inglesant, and his life would have been worth little had he fallen into the hands of the mob. When the news of the fall of Chester and of Inglesant's arrest and subsequent transference to the Parliamentary commander, reached Oxford, the King sent for the Jesuit privately, and received him in his cabinet at Christ Church.

The King appeared anxious and ill, and as though he did not know where to turn or what to do.

'You have heard the news, Father, I suppose,' he said. 'Lord Biron, as well as Digby, has taken upon himself to keep the King's conscience, and know the King's mind better than he does himself. How many Kings there are in England

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now, I do not know, but I have ever found my most faithful servants my most strict masters. You know Jack Inglesant has been given over to the rebels? What are we to do for him?’

‘Your Majesty can do nothing,’ said the Jesuit. ‘All that could be done has been done, and as far as may be has been done well. All that your Majesty has to do now is to be silent.’

‘Then Inglesant must be given up,’ said the King.

‘He must be given up. Your Majesty has no choice.’

‘Another!’ said the King, bitterly. ‘Strafford, whose blood tinges every sight I see! Laud, Glamorgan, now another! What right have I to suppose my servants will be faithful to me, when I give them up, one by one, without a word?’

‘Your Majesty does not discriminate,’ said the Jesuit; ‘your good heart overpowers your clearer reason. It is as much your duty for the good of the State, to be deaf to the voice of private feeling and friendship, as it is for your servants to be deaf to all but the call of duty to your Majesty; and this your servants know, and do not dream that they have any cause to complain. Strafford and the Archbishop both acknowledged this, and now it will be the same again. There is no fear of John Inglesant, your Majesty.’

‘No,’ said the King, rising and pacing the closet with unequal steps, ‘there is no fear of

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John Inglesant, I believe you. There is no fear that any man will betray his friends, and be false to his Order and his plighted word, except the King !—except the King !’

Apparently the Jesuit did not think it worth while to answer this outbreak, for he said, after a pause,—

‘Your Majesty has written to Glamorgan ?’

‘Yes, I have told him to keep quiet,’ said the King, sitting down again ; ‘he is in no danger—I am clear of him. But do you mean to say, Father, that Inglesant must be left to the gallows without a word ?’

‘No, I do not say that, your Majesty,’ said the other ; ‘the rebels will do nothing in a hurry, you may depend. They will do all they can to get something from him which may be useful against your Majesty, and it will be months before they have done with him. I have good friends among them, and shall know all that happens. When they are tired of him, and the thing is blown over a little, I shall do what I can.’

‘And you are sure of him,’ said the King ; ‘any evidence signed by him would be fatal indeed.’

‘Your Majesty may be quite easy,’ said the other, ‘I am sure of him.’

‘They will threaten him with the gallows,’ said the King ; ‘life is sweet to most men.’

‘I suppose it is,’ said the Jesuit, as if it were

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an assertion he had heard several times lately, and began to think he must believe ; ' I have no experience in such matters. But, however sweet it may be, its sweetness will not induce John Inglesant to utter a syllable against the cause in which he is engaged.'

' You are very confident of your pupil,' said the King. ' I hope you will not be deceived.'

The Jesuit smiled, but did not seem to think it necessary to make any further protestations, and soon after left the closet.

* * * * *

Inglesant remained some time in confinement at St. James's before he was summoned before the Parliamentary Committee, but at the beginning of March another of those extraordinary events occurred which seemed arranged by some providential hand to fight against the King. A packet boat put into Padstow, in Cornwall, supposing it to be a royal garrison ; on discovering their mistake, and some slight resistance having been overpowered, the captain threw a packet of letters and some loose papers overboard. The papers were lost, but the packet was fished out of the sea, and proved to contain the most important of the correspondence from Lord Digby, describing the discovery of the plot, the articles of agreement with the Papists, the copy of the warrant from the King to the Earl of Glamorgan, and several letters from the Earl himself, all asserting his innocence of any actions but those directed

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and approved by the King. These letters were published *in extenso* by the Parliament in a pamphlet which appeared on the 17th of March. The information contained in these papers was of the greatest use to the Parliament, for, though there was nothing in them absolutely to inculcate the King (indeed the letters of Lord Digby, as far as they went, were strong proofs to the contrary), yet it placed it in their power to make assertions and inquiries based upon fact, and it brought forward Lord Glamorgan as an evidence on their side. If they could now have produced a confession signed by Inglesant to the same effect, the case would have been almost complete—at any rate few would have hesitated to call the moral proof certain. A Committee of the Commons was appointed to examine Inglesant, and he was summoned to appear before them.

On the day appointed he was brought from St. James's across the Park in a sedan, guarded by soldiers, and not being recognized escaped without any notice from the passers-by.

The Committee sat in one of the rooms of the Parliament House, and began by asking Inglesant his name.

'I understand,' said one of the members savagely, 'that your name is Inglesant, of a family of courtiers and sycophants, who for generations have earned their wretched food by doing any kind of dirty work the Court set them; and that they never failed to do it so

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as to earn a reputation even among the mean reptiles of the Court precincts. This is true, is it not? And you have held some of those posts which an honest man would scorn.'

Inglesant had recovered his health during his imprisonment, thanks to rest and sufficient food, and his manner was quiet and confident. To the attack of the Parliamentarian he answered simply,—

'My name is Inglesant; I have been Esquire of the Body to the King.'

The Chairman checked the warmth of the Puritan, and began to question Inglesant concerning the plot, endeavouring to throw him off his guard by mentioning facts which had come to their knowledge through the recent discoveries. But Inglesant was prepared with his story. Though he was surprised at the amount of knowledge the Committee possessed, yet he stood to his assertion that he knew nothing of any instructions except those which he had himself received, and that the whole plot originated with the Jesuits, as far as he knew, and had every reason to believe. When he was asked how he, a Protestant and a Churchman, could lend himself to such a plot, he replied that he was very much inclined to the Romish Church, and that he thought the King's affairs so desperate that the plan of obtaining help from the Irish rebels appeared to him and to Father St. Clare as almost the only resource

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left to them. The Committee, finding gentle means fail, adopted a sterner tone, telling him he was guilty of high treason, without benefit, and that he might certainly, on his own confession, be condemned to the gallows without further trial. They then offered him a statement to sign, which, they said, they had sure information contained nothing but the truth. Inglesant looked at it, and saw that in truth it did contain a very fair statement of what had really taken place.

He replied that it was impossible for him to sign anything so opposite to what he had himself confessed ; and that even if he did, no one would believe so monstrous a statement, and one so contrary to the known opinions and professions of the King.

The Committee then asked him why, if the King's commission was forged, it was kept back, and where it was ?

Inglesant said that 'the Lord Biron had it, having forcibly taken it from him, and refused to return it, telling him plainly that he should keep it as evidence against him.'

He observed that this impressed the Committee, and he was soon after dismissed. He returned to St. James's the same way that he came, but found a strong guard summoned to attend him ; for, the news of his examination having got wind, the crowd assembled at the Parliament House, and accompanied him, with

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hootings and insults of every kind, across the Park.

As one result of his examination, Inglesant was removed from St. James's, and sent by water to the Tower, where a close confinement in a small cell, and insufficient diet, again affected his health. He formed the idea that the Parliament intended to weaken him with long imprisonment, and so cause him to confess what they wished; he feared that the state of his health, and especially the extent to which his brain was affected, would assist this purpose; and this fear preyed upon him, and made him nervous and miserable—dreading above everything that, his mind being clouded, he might say something inadvertently which might discover the truth. His health rapidly declined, and he became again thin and worn. The Parliament Committee now spread a report that the royal party, who pretended to indicate the offenders in this plot, did not really do so; and that in particular they kept back the originals of the King's warrants and commissions, which they asserted to be forgeries, and refused to bring them forward and submit them to proof, which would be the surest way of making the fact of the King's ignorance of them certain. They did this because they knew Lord Biron's character as a man of unstained and unsuspecting honour, and they calculated that such a taunt as this would be certain to bring him forward with

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the commission, which he had in his keeping, and which they trusted to be able to prove was a genuine document. Their policy had the desired effect. Lord Biron, who was at Newstead, without consulting any one, sent up a special messenger to the Speaker to say that, a safe-conduct being granted him, he would come up to London, and appear before the Committee of Parliament, bringing the commission, which he asserted was a palpable forgery, with him. The safe-conduct was immediately sent him, and he came up. The Committee were rejoiced at the success of their policy, and fixed a day for him to appear before them, and at the same time ordered Inglesant to be fetched up from the Tower to be confronted with his lordship. The affair caused the greatest interest, and the Committee Room was thronged with all who could command sufficient influence to obtain entrance, and crowds filled the corridors and the precincts of the House. Lord Biron was introduced, and gave his evidence with great clearness, describing the arrest of Inglesant, his suspicious conduct, and his attempt to induce Lord Biron to destroy the warrant; and finally produced the paper, and handed it to the clerk of the Committee. The Chairman then ordered Inglesant to be brought in through a side door, and he came up to the bar.

His appearance was so altered, and his manner so cowed and embarrassed, that a murmur ran

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through the room, and Lord Biron could not restrain an exclamation of pity. Inglesant started when he saw him, for he had been kept in complete ignorance of what had occurred, and his mind immediately recurred to the commission. He was evidently making the greatest efforts to collect himself and keep himself calm. Nothing could have told more against himself, or in favour of the part he was playing, than his whole demeanour.

He was examined minutely on the circumstances of his arrest, and related everything exactly as it occurred, which, indeed, he had done before—both his relations tallying exactly with Lord Biron's.

When asked what his business was in Chester, he said—to prepare the Cavaliers to receive the Irish help ; and added that he had been obliged to communicate a great deal more to Lord Biron than he had wished or intended, and that Lord Biron had always manifested the greatest suspicion of him and of his mission.

He gave his evidence steadily, but without looking at Lord Biron, or indeed at any one.

When asked why he wished to recover possession of the commission, or at least to induce Lord Biron to burn it, he replied,—

‘Lest it should serve as evidence against myself.’

This seemed to most present a very natural

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answer ; yet it caused Lord Biron to start, and to fix a searching glance on Inglesant.

As a gentleman of high breeding and instinctive honour, it jarred upon his instinct, and conveyed a sudden suspicion that Inglesant was acting. That the latter might be so utterly perverted by his Jesuit teaching as to be lost to all sense of right and truth, he was prepared to believe ; that he might have been led into treason knowingly or inadvertently, he was willing to think ; but the low and pitiful motive that he gave was so opposed to his previous character, notorious for a fantastic elevation and refinement of sentiment, that it supposed him a monster, or that some miracle had been wrought upon him. A terrible doubt—a doubt which Biron had once or twice already seen faintly in the distance—approached nearer and looked him in the face.

The Committee had examined the commission one by one, comparing it with some of the King's writing which they had before them ; finally it passed into the hands of a Mr. Greenway, a lawyer skilled in questions of evidence and of writing, who examined it attentively.

It was curious to see the behaviour of the two men under examination while this was going on ; Lord Biron, as a noble gentleman, from whose mind the doubt of a few minutes ago had passed, standing erect and confident,

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looking haughtily and freely at the expert, secure in his own honour and in that of his King : Inglesant, cowed and anxious, leaning forward over the bar, his eyes fixed also on the lawyer—pale, his lips twitching,—the very picture of the guilty prisoner in the dock.

The expert looked at both the men curiously, then threw down the paper contemptuously.

‘It is a palpable forgery,’ he said ; ‘and not even a clever imitation of the King’s hand.’

And indeed, from some accident or other, the letters were, some of them, formed in a manner unusual to the King.

Inglesant, weakened with illness and anxiety, could not restrain a movement of intense relief. He drew a long breath and stood erect, as if relieved from an oppressive weight. He raised his eyes, and they caught those of Lord Biron, which had been attracted towards him, and were fixed full on his face.

Biron started again ; there was not the least doubt that Inglesant rejoiced in the proof of the forgery of the warrant. That terrible doubt stood close now before his lordship, and grasped him by the throat.

Suppose, after all, this man whom he had imprisoned and despised, whose mission he had thwarted—this man whom all the royal party were calling by every contemptuous name, who stood there pale, cowed, beaten down ;—suppose, after all, that this man, alone against these

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terrible odds, was all the time fighting a desperate battle for the King's honour, forsaken by God and men ! But the consequences which would follow, if this view of the matter were the true one, were, in Lord Biron's estimation, too terrible to be thought of.

'I wish to say,' said Inglesant, looking straight before him, 'that the Lord Biron obtained possession of that paper when he was in possession of information of which I was ignorant. His lordship would probably have behaved differently, but he thought he was speaking to a thief.'

There was something in this covert reproach, so worded, which so exactly accorded with what was passing in Lord Biron's mind that it cut him to the quick.

'I assure you, Mr. Inglesant,' he said eagerly, 'you are mistaken. Whatever I may think of the cause in which you are engaged, I have always wished to behave to you as to a gentleman. If you consider that you have cause of complaint against me, I shall be ready, when these unhappy complications are well over, as I trust they may be, to give you satisfaction and to beg your pardon afterwards.'

He said these last words so pointedly that Inglesant started, and saw at once that his fear had been well founded, and that, thrown off his guard by the success of the examination of the warrant, he had made a mistake. He looked up

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quickly at Biron—a strange terror in his face—and their eyes met.

That they understood each other is probable ; at any rate Inglesant's look was so full of warning that Biron understood *that* if nothing more, and restrained himself at once. All this had passed almost unnoticed by the Committee, who were consulting together.

Lord Biron left the room, and Inglesant was taken back to the Tower as he had come. Mr. Secretary Milton, who had been present as a spectator, left the Parliament House and proceeded at once to Clerkenwell Green to the house of General Cromwell, and related to him and to General Ireton, who was with him, what had occurred.

'They have gained nothing by getting this warrant,' he said ; 'nay, you have lost, rather. You have brought up Lord Biron, who comes forward in the light of day and with the utmost confidence, and challenges this paper to be a forgery, and your own lawyers bear him out in it. I have not the least doubt it is the King's ; but some of the letters, either purposely or more probably by accident, are not in his usual hand, and the best judges cannot agree on these matters. Out of Inglesant you will get nothing. He is a consummate actor, as I have known of old. He is prepared at every point, and carefully trained by his masters the Jesuits. I know these men, and have seen them both here and

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abroad. Acting on select natures the training is perfect. They will go to death more indifferently than to a Court ball. You may rack them to the extremity of anguish, and in the delirium of pain they will say what they have been trained to say, and not the truth. You may wear him out with fasting and anxiety until he makes some mistake; he made two to-day, besides one which was a necessity of the case,—for I do not see what else he could have said,—that was so slight that no one saw it but Biron. Weakened by anxiety, doubtless, he could not restrain a movement of relief when the expert declared the warrant a forgery; Biron saw that too, for I watched him. Last, which was the greatest mistake of all, and would show that his training is not entirely perfect, were we not to make allowance for his broken health, he forgot his part, and suffered his passion to get the better of him, and to taunt Lord Biron in such a way that Biron, who I think till then honestly believed the King's word, very nearly let out the truth in his astonishment. But what do you gain by all this? It rather adds to the apparent truth of the man's story, and gives life to his evidence. Nothing but his written testimony will be of any use, and this you will never get.'

'He shall be tried for his life at any rate,' said Cromwell.

'You have threatened him with that already.'

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‘Threatening is one thing,’ replied the General, ‘to stand beneath the gallows condemned to death another.’

* * * * *

News of the taking of Chester and of the arrest of John Inglesant on such a terrible charge—a charge at once of treason against the King, his country, and his religion—as it travelled at once over England, reached Gidding in due course. It caused the greatest dismay and distress in that quiet household. About the middle of April a gentleman of Huntingdon, a Parliament man, who had lately come from London, dined with the family. He told them during dinner that he had been present in the Committee Room when Mr. Inglesant had been examined. When dinner was over Mr. John Ferrar, who was now at the head of the family, remained at table with this gentleman, being anxious to hear more, and Mary Collet also stayed to hear what she could of her friend, watching every word with eager eyes. In that family, where there was nothing but love and kindliness and entire sympathy, it was thought only natural that she should do so, and no ill-natured thought occurred to any member of it. The Parliament man described more at full the examination before the Committee, and Inglesant’s worn and guilty appearance,—sad news, indeed, to both his hearers. He described Lord

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Biron's examination, and the production of the forged warrant.

'And did John Inglesant admit that it was forged?' said Mr. Ferrar.

'Yes, he said from his own knowledge that it was prepared by Father St. Clare the Jesuit.'

'It is a strange world,' said Mr. Ferrar dreamily, 'and the Divine call seems to lead some of us into slippery places—scarcely the heavenly places in Christ of which the Apostle dreamt.'

The gentleman did not understand him, nor did Mary Collet altogether until afterwards.

Presently Mr. Ferrar said,—

'And what do you think of it all? Was the warrant forged or not?'

'I am somewhat at a loss what to think,' said the other; 'I am not, as you know, Mr. Ferrar, and without wishing to offend you, an admirer of the King, but I do not believe him to be a fool and mad. There is no doubt that he has tampered with the Papists throughout, yet I cannot think, unless he is in greater extremities than we suppose, that he would have practised so wild and mad a scheme as this one of the Irish rebels and murderers. On the other hand, I can conceive nothing too bad for the Jesuits to attempt; and it seems to me that I can discern something of their hand in this—an introduction of an armed Papist force into the country,

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to be joined, doubtless, by all the English Papists ; only I should have thought they could have procured this without bringing in the King's name, but doubtless they had some reason for this also. The general opinion among the Parliament men is that the warrant is the King's, and that he has planned the whole thing. On the other hand, it is plain the Cavaliers do not believe it, or Lord Biron would never have come boldly up of his own accord, and brought up the warrant so confidently.'

'But does not the warrant itself prove something one way or the other ?' said Mr. Ferrar.

'These things are very difficult to judge upon,' said the gentleman. 'The expert to whom the Committee gave it pronounced it a forgery upon the spot, but he has been greatly blamed for precipitancy ; and others to whom it has been shown pronounce it genuine. Some of the letters certainly are not like the King's, but the style of the hand is the King's they say, even in these unusual letters. By the way, if you had seen Inglesant's guilty look when the expert took the paper in his hand, you would say with me it was a forgery. You could not, to my mind, have a stronger proof.'

'But if the King had ordered this, would not he help Mr. Inglesant ?' Mary Collet ventured to say.

'Help ? madam,' said the gentleman warmly ; 'when did the King help any of his friends ?'

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‘Whichever way it is,’ said Mr. Ferrar mildly, ‘he cannot help. To help would be to condemn himself in public opinion, which in these unhappy distractions he dare not do. Did Lord Biron speak to Mr. Inglesant, sir?’

‘Very little. They taunted each other once, and seemed about to come to blows. All the evidence went to show that Lord Biron suspected him from the first.’

The gentleman soon after left. Mr. Ferrar returned to the dining-room after seeing him to his horse, and found Mary Collet sitting where they had left her, lost in sad and humiliating thought.

He sat down near her and said kindly,—

‘My dear Mrs. Mary, I hardly know which of the two alternatives is the best for your friend—for my friend; but it is better at least for you to know the truth, and I think I can now pretty much tell which is the true one. If this plot were altogether the Jesuits’, John Inglesant would not say it. If the King had no hand in it, proof would be given a thousand ways without having recourse to this. There are other facts which to my mind are conclusive that this way of thinking is the right one, but I need not tell them all to you. What I have said I should say to none but you. You will see that it is of the utmost importance that you say nothing of it to any. I believe you may comfort yourself in thinking that,

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according to the light which is given him, John Inglesant is following what he believes to be his duty, and none can say at any rate that it is a smooth and easy path he has chosen to walk in.'

Mary Collet thanked him, her beautiful eyes full of tears, and left the room.

A few days afterwards the news ran like wildfire over England that the King had left Oxford secretly, and that no one knew where he was; and a night or two afterwards Mr. John Ferrar was called up by a gentleman who said he was Dr. Hudson, the King's Chaplain, and that the King was alone, a few paces from the door, and that he would immediately fetch him in.

Mr. Ferrar received His Majesty with all possible respect. But fearing that Gidding, from the known loyalty of the family, might be a suspected place, for better concealment he conducted the King to a private house at Coppingford, an obscure village at a small distance from Gidding, and not far from Stilton. It was a very dark night, and but for the lantern Mr. Ferrar carried, they could not have known the way. As it was, they lost their way once, and wandered for some time in a ploughed field. Mr. Ferrar always spoke with the utmost passionate distress of this night, as of a night the incidents of which must have awakened the compassion of every feeling heart, however

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biased against the King. As a proof of the most affecting distress, the King, he said, was serene and even cheerful, and said he was protected by the King of kings. His Majesty slept at Coppingford, but early in the May morning he was up, and parted from Mr. Ferrar, going towards Stamford. Mr. Ferrar returned to his house, and two days after it was known that the King had given himself up to the Scottish army.

CHAPTER XIV

INGLESANT remained in prison, and would have thought that he had been forgotten, but that every few weeks he was sent for by the Committee and examined. The Committee got no new facts from him, and indeed probably did not expect to get any ; but it was very useful to the Parliament party to keep him before the public gaze as a Royalist and a Jesuit. It was a common imputation upon the Cavaliers that they were Papists, and anything that strengthened this belief made the King's party odious to the nation. Here was a servant of the King's, an avowed Jesuit, and one self-condemned in the most terrible crimes. It is true he was disowned by the royal party, apparently sincerely ; but the general impression conveyed by his case was favourable to the Parliament, and they therefore took care to keep it before the world. These examinations were looked forward to by Inglesant with great pleasure, the row up the river and the sight of fresh faces being such a delight to him. He was not confined to his

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room, being allowed to walk at certain hours in the court of the Tower, and he found a box containing a few books, a Lucretius and a few other Latin books, probably left by some former occupant of the cell. These were not taken from him, and he read and re-read them, especially the Lucretius, many times. They saved him from utter prostration and despair,—they and a secret help which he acknowledged afterwards,—a help, which to men of his nature certainly does come upon prayer to God, to whatever source it may be ascribed; a help which in terrible sleepless hours, in hours of dread weariness of life, in hours of nervous pain more terrible than all, calms the heart and soothes the brain, and leaves peace and cheerfulness and content in the place of restlessness and despair. Inglesant said that repeating the name of Jesus simply in the lonely nights kept his brain quiet when it was on the point of distraction, being of the same mind as Sir Charles Lucas, when, ‘many times calling upon the sacred name of Jesus,’ he was shot dead at Colchester.

More than a year passed over him. From the scraps of news he could gather from his jailer, and from the soldiers in the court during his walks, he learnt that the King had been given up by the Scots, had escaped from Hampton Court, had been retaken and sent to Carisbrook, and was soon to come to London, the man said, for his trial.

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It was soon after he had learnt this last news that his jailer suddenly informed him that he was to be tried for his life.

Accordingly, soon after, a warrant arrived from Bradshaw, the President of the Council of State, to bring him before that body.

The Council sat in Essex House, and some gentlemen, who had surrendered Pembroke upon terms that they should depart the country in three days, but—accounting it base to desert their prince, and hoping that there might be farther occasion of service to His Majesty,—had remained in London, were upon their trial. When Inglesant arrived with his guard these gentlemen were under examination, and one of them, who had a wife and children, was fighting hard for his life, arguing the case step by step with the lawyers and the Council. Inglesant was left waiting in the anteroom several hours; from the conversation he overheard, the room being constantly full of all sorts of men coming and going—soldiers, lawyers, divines—he learnt that the King's trial was coming on very soon, and he fancied that his name was mentioned, as though the nearness of the King's trial had something to do with his own being hurried on. It was a cold day, and there was a large fire in the anteroom. Inglesant had had nothing to eat since morning, and felt weak and faint. He wished the other examinations over that his own might come on; his, he thought, would not

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take long. At last the gentlemen were referred to the Council of War, to be dealt with as spies, and came out of the Council chamber with their guards. The one was a plain country gentleman, and neither of them knew Inglesant, but, stopping a moment in the anteroom, while the guard prepared themselves, one of them asked his name, saying he was afraid they had kept him waiting a long time. This was Colonel Eustace Powell, and Inglesant met him again when he thought he had only a few minutes to live.

The Council debated whether they should hear Inglesant that day, as it was now late in the afternoon, and the candles were lighted, but finally he was sent for into the Council.

As soon as he came to the bar, Bradshaw asked him suddenly when he saw the King last, to which he replied that he had not seen the King since Naseby field.

‘You were at Naseby, then?’ said Bradshaw.

‘Yes,’ said Inglesant.

‘And you ran away, I suppose?’

‘Yes, I ran away.’

‘Then you are a coward as well as a traitor,’ said Bradshaw.

‘I am not braver than other men,’ said Inglesant.

Inglesant was then examined more in form, but very shortly; everything he said having been said so often before.

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The President then told him that, by his own confession, he was guilty of death, and should be hanged at once if he persisted in it, but that the Council did not believe his confession—indeed, had evidence and confessions from others to prove the reverse ; and therefore, if he persisted in his course, he was his own murderer, and could hope for no mercy from God. That if he would sign the declaration which they offered him, which they knew to be true, and which stated that he had only acted under the King's orders, he should not only have his life spared, but should very shortly be set at liberty.

To this he replied that if they had evidence to prove what they said, they did not want his ; that he could not put his name to evidence so contrary to what he had always confessed, and was prepared to stand by to death ; that, as to his fate before God, he left his soul in His hands, who was more merciful than man.

To this Bradshaw replied that they were most merciful to him, and desired to save him from himself ; that, if he died, he died with a lie upon his lips, from his own obstinacy and suicide.

Making no answer to this, he was ordered back to the Tower, and warned to prepare himself for death. He saw clearly that their object was to bring out evidence signed by him on the eve of the King's trial, which no doubt would have been a great help to their cause. As he went

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back in his barge to the Tower, he wondered why they did not publish something with his name attached, without troubling themselves about his consent. As they went down the river, the darkness became denser, and the boat passed close to many other wherries, nearly running them down; the lights on the boats and the barges glimmered indistinctly, and made the course more difficult and uncertain. They shot the bridge under the mass of dark houses and irregular lights, and proceeded across the pool towards the Tower stairs. The pool was somewhat clear of ships, and the lanterns upon the wharves and such vessels as were at anchor made a clearer light than that above the bridge. As they crossed the pool, a wherry, rowed by a single man, came towards them obliquely from the Surrey side, so as to approach near enough to discern their persons, and then, crossing their bows, suffered itself to be run down before the barge could be stopped. The waterman climbed in at the bows, as his own wherry filled and went down. He seemed a stupid, surly man, and might be supposed to be either deaf or drunk. To the abuse of the soldiers and watermen he made no answer but that he was an up-river waterman, and was confused by the lights and the current of the bridge. The officer called him aft into the stern, and as he came towards them Inglesant knew him in spite of his perfect disguise. It was the Jesuit.

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He answered as many of the officer's questions as he appeared to understand, and took no manner of notice of Inglesant, who of course appeared entirely indifferent and uninterested. When they landed at the stairs, the waterman, with a perfectly professional manner, swung himself over the side into the water, and steadied the boat for the gentlemen to land, which act the officer took as an awkward expression of respect and gratitude. As Inglesant passed him he put his hand up for his to rest on, and Johnny felt a folded note passed into it. Without the least pause, he followed the officer across the Tower wharf, and was conducted to his room. As soon as he was alone he examined the paper, which contained these words only:—

‘You are not forgotten. Keep on a little longer. The end is very near.’

It made little impression upon him, nor did it influence his after conduct, which had already been sufficiently determined upon. He expected very little help from any one, though he believed that Father St. Clare would do what he could. The Jesuit would have died himself at any moment had his purpose required it, and he could not think that he would regard as of much importance the fall of another soldier in the same rank. He was mistaken, but he did not know it; the Jesuit, beneath his placid exterior, retained for his favourite and cleverest pupil an almost passionate regard, and would

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have done for him far more than he would have thought worth the doing for himself. Meanwhile, Inglesant translated his words into a different language, and thought more than once that doubtless they were very true, and that, though in a sense not intended, the end was very near.

This took place at the beginning of December, and about a week afterwards the jailer advised Inglesant to prepare for death, for the warrant to behead him was signed, and would be put into execution that day week at Charing Cross. He immediately sent a petition to the Council of State, that a Priest, either of the Roman Catholic or the English Church, he was indifferent which, might be sent him. To this an answer was sent immediately that he was dying with a lie upon his lips, and that the presence of no priest or minister could be of any use to him, and would not be granted. The same day a Presbyterian minister was admitted to him, who used the same arguments for some time without effect, representing the fearful condition that Inglesant was in as an unrepentant sinner. Inglesant began to regret that he had made any application, and this regret was increased two days afterwards when a man, who offered him certain proofs that he was a Roman Catholic Priest, was admitted, and gave him the same advice, refusing him Absolution and the Sacrament unless he com-

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plied. Upon this Inglesant became desperate, and refused to speak again. The Priest waited some time and then left, telling him he was eternally lost.

This was the severest trial he had yet met with ; but his knowledge of the different parties in the Romish Church, and the extent to which they subordinated their religion to their political intrigues, was too great to allow him to feel it so much as he otherwise would. He resigned himself to die unassisted. He applied for an English Prayer Book, but this also was refused. He remembered the old monastic missals he had possessed at Westacre, and thought over all those days with the tenderest regret.

The fatal morning arrived at last. Inglesant had passed a sleepless night ; he had not the slightest fear of death, but excitement made sleep impossible. He thought often of his brother, but he had learned that he was in Paris alone ; and even had he been in England, he felt no especial desire to see him under circumstances which could only have been intensely painful. Mary Collet he thought of night and day, but he knew it was impossible to obtain permission to see her, and he was tired of fruitless requests. He was tired and wearied of life, and only wished the excitement and strain over, that he might be at rest. It struck him that the greatest harshness was used towards him ; his food was very poor and of the

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smallest quantity, and no one was admitted to him ; but he did not wonder at this, knowing that his case differed from any other Loyalist prisoner.

At about eight o'clock on the appointed morning, the same officer who had conducted him before entered his room with the Lieutenant of the Tower, bringing the warrant for his death. The Lieutenant parted from him in a careless and indifferent way. They went by water and landed by York Stairs, and proceeded by back ways to a house nearly adjoining Northumberland House, facing the wide street about Charing Cross. From one of the first floor windows a staircase had been contrived, leading up to a high scaffold or platform on which the block was fixed. Inglesant had not known till that morning whether he was to be hanged or beheaded ; like every other thought, save one, it was indifferent to him—that one, how he should keep his secret to the last. In the room of this house opening on the scaffold, he found Colonel Eustace Powell, whom he had met at Essex House, who was to precede him to death. He greeted Inglesant with great kindness, but, as John thought, with some reserve. He was a very pious man, strongly attached to the Protestant party in the Church of England, and he had passed the last three days entirely in the company of Dr. S——, who was then in the room with him, engaged in religious

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exercises, and his piety and resignation had attached the Doctor to him very much. The Doctor now proceeded to ask the Colonel, before Inglesant and the others, a series of questions, in order that he should give some account of his religion, and of his faith, charity, and repentance, to all of which he answered fully; that he acknowledged his death to be a just punishment of God for his former sins; that he acknowledged that his just due was eternal punishment, from which he only expected to escape through the satisfaction made by Christ, by which Mediator, and none other, he hoped to be saved. The Doctor then asking him if, by a miracle (not to put him in vain hope), God should save him that day, what life he would resolve to lead hereafter? he replied, 'It is a question of great length, and requires a great time to answer. Men in such straits would promise great things, but a vow I would make, and by God's help endeavour to keep it, though I would first call some friend to limit how far I should make a vow, that I might not make a rash one, and offer the sacrifice of fools.'

In answer to other questions he said,—'He wished well to all lawful governments; that he did not justify himself in having ventured against the existing one; he left God to judge it whether it be righteous, and if it be, it must stand. He desired to make reparation to any he had injured, and he forgave his enemies.'

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The Doctor then addressed him at length, saying,—

‘Sir, I shall trouble you very little farther. I thank you for all those heavenly colloquies I have enjoyed by being in your company these three days, and truly I am sorry I must part with so heavenly an associate. We have known one another heretofore, but never so Christianlike before. I have rather been a scholar to learn from you than an instructor. I wish this stage, wherein you are made a spectacle to God, angels, and the world, may be a school to all about you; for though I will not diminish your sins, yet I think there are few here have a lighter load upon them than you have, and I only wish them your repentance, and that measure of faith that God hath given you, and that measure of courage you have attained from God.’

The Colonel, having wished all who were present in the room farewell, went up on the scaffold accompanied by the Divine. The scaffold was so near that Inglesant and the officers and the guards, who stood at the window screened from the sight of the people, could hear every word that passed. They understood that the whole open place was densely crowded, but they could scarcely believe it, the silence was so profound.

Colonel Powell made a speech of some length, clearing himself of Popery in earnest

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language, not blaming his judges, but throwing the guilt on false witnesses, whom, however, he forgave. He bore no malice to the present Government, nor pretended to decide controversies, and spoke touchingly of the sadness and gloom of violent death, and how mercifully he was dealt with in being able to face it with a quiet mind. He finally thanked the authorities for their courtesy in granting him the death of the axe—a death somewhat worthy of his blood, answerable to his birth and qualification—which courtesy had much helped towards the pacification of his mind.

Inglesant supposed the end was now come, but to his surprise the Doctor again stepped forward, and before all the people repeated the whole former questions, to each of which the Colonel replied in nearly the same words.

Then stepping forward again to the front of the scaffold, the Colonel said, speaking to the people in a calm and tender voice,—

‘There is not one face that looks upon me, though many faces, and perhaps different from me in opinion and practice, but methinks hath something of pity in it; and may that mercy which is in your hearts now be meted to you when you have need of it! I beseech you join with me in prayer.’

The completest silence prevailed, broken only by a faint sobbing and whispering sound from the excited and pitying crowd. Colonel

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Powell prayed for a quarter of an hour with an audible voice ; then taking leave again of his friends and directing the executioner when to strike, he knelt down to the block, and repeating the words, 'Lord Jesus, receive me,' his head was smitten off with a blow.

A long deep groan, followed by an intense silence, ran through the crowd. The officer who accompanied Inglesant looked at him with a peculiar expression ; and, bowing in return, Inglesant passed through the window, and as he mounted the steps and his eyes came to the level of, and then rose higher than the interposing scaffold, he saw the dense crowd of heads stretching far away on every hand, the house windows and roofs crowded on every side. He scarcely saw it before he almost lost the sight again. A wild motion that shook the crowd, a roar that filled the air and stunned the sense, a yell of indignation, contempt, hatred, hands shook and clutched at him, wild faces leaping up and staring at him, cries of 'Throw him over !' 'Give over the Jesuit to us !' 'Throw over the Irish murderer !' made his senses reel for a moment, and his heart stop. It was inconceivable that a crowd, the instant before placid, pitiful, silent, should in a moment become like that, deafening, mad, thirsting for blood. The amazing surprise and reaction produced the greatest shock. Hardening himself in a moment, he faced the people, his hat

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in his hand, his pale face hard set, his teeth closed. Once or twice he tried to speak ; it would have been as easy to drown the Atlantic's roar. As he stood, apparently calm, this terrible ordeal had the worst possible effect upon his mind. Other men came to the scaffold calm in mind, prepared by holy thoughts, and the sacred, tender services of the Church of their Lord, feeling His hand indeed in theirs. They spoke, amid silence and solemn prayers, to a pitying people, the name of Jesus on their lips, the old familiar words whispered in their ears, good wishes, deference, respect all around, their path seemed smooth and upward to the heavenly gates. But with him—how different ! Denied the aid of prayer and sacrament, alone, overwhelmed with contempt and hatred, deafened with the fiendish noise which racked his excited and overwrought brain. He was indifferent before ; he became hardened, fierce, contemptuous now. Hated, he hated again. All the worst spirit of his party and of his age became uppermost. He felt as though engaged in a mad duel with a despised yet too powerful foe. He turned at last to the officer, and said, his voice scarcely heard amid the unceasing roar,—

‘ You see, sir, I cannot speak ; do not let us delay any longer.’

The officer hesitated, and glanced at another gentleman, evidently a Parliament man, who advanced to Inglesant, and offered him a paper,

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the purport of which he knew by this time too well.

He told him in his ear that even now he should be set at liberty if he would sign the true evidence, and not rush upon his fate and lose his soul. He repeated that the Parliament knew he was not guilty, and had no wish to put him to death.

Inglesant saw the natural rejoinder, but did not think it worth his while to make it. Only get this thing over, and escape from this maddening cry, tearing his brain with its terrible roar, to something quieter at any rate.

He rejected the paper, and turning to the officer he said, with a motion towards the people of inexpressible disdain,—

‘These good people are impatient for the final act, sir; do not let us keep them any longer.’

The officer still hesitated, and looked at the Parliament man, who shook his head, and immediately left the scaffold. The officer then leaned on the rail, and spoke to his lieutenant in the open space round the scaffold within the barriers. The latter gave a word of command, and the soldiers fell out of their rank so as to mingle with the crowd. As soon as the officer saw this manœuvre completed, he took Inglesant’s arm, and said hurriedly,—‘Come with me to the house, and be quick.’ Not knowing what he did, Inglesant followed him

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hastily into the room. They had need to be quick. A yell, to which the noise preceding it was as nothing—terrible as it had been, a shower of stones, smashing every pane of glass, and falling in heaps at their feet,—showed the fury of a maddened, injured people, robbed of their expected prey.

The officer looked at Inglesant, and laughed.

‘I thought there would be a tumult,’ he said; ‘we are not safe here; the troops will not oppose them, and they will break down the doors. Come with me.’

He led Inglesant, still almost unconscious, through the back entries and yards, the roar of the people still in their ears, till they reached a stair leading to the river, where was a wherry and two or three guards. The officer stepped in after Inglesant, crying, ‘Pull away! The Tower!’ then, leaning back, and looking at Inglesant, he said,—

‘You stood that very well. I would rather mount the deadliest breach than face such a sight as that.’

Inglesant asked him if he knew what this extraordinary change of intention meant.

To which he replied,—

‘No; I acted to orders. Probably you are of more use to the Parliament alive than dead; besides, I fancy you have friends. I should think you are safe now.’

That afternoon, a report spread through

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London that Inglesant, the King's servant, had confessed all that was required of him upon the scaffold, and had his life given him in return. This report was believed mostly by the lower orders, especially those who had been before the scaffold; but few of the upper classes credited it, and even these only did so for a day or two. The Parliament made no further effort; and Inglesant was left quietly in prison.

This happened on the 19th of December, and on the 20th of January the King's trial began. That could scarcely be called a trial which consisted entirely in a struggle between the King and the Court on a point of law. In the charge of high treason, read in Westminster Hall against the King, special mention was made of the commission which he 'doth still continue to the Earl of Ormond, and to the Irish rebels and revolvers associated with him, from whom further invasions upon the land are threatened.' There appear to have been no witnesses examined on this point, all that were examined during three days, in the painted chamber, simply witnessing to having seen the King in arms. Indeed, all witnesses were unnecessary, the sentence having been already determined upon, and the King utterly refusing to plead or to acknowledge the Court. The King, indeed, never appeared to such advantage as on his trial; he was perfectly unmoved by any personal thought; no fear, hesitation, or waver-

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ing appeared in his behaviour. He took his stand simply on the indisputable point of law that neither that Court, nor indeed any Court had any authority to try him. To Bradshaw's assertion that he derived his authority from the people, he in vain requested a single precedent that the Monarchy of England was elective, or had been elective, for a thousand years. In his abandonment of self, and his unshaken constancy to a point of principle, he contrasted most favourably with his judges, whose sole motive was self. That none of the Parliamentary leaders were safe while the King lived is probable ; but sound statesmanship does not acknowledge self-preservation as an excuse for mistaken policy, and the murder of the King was not more a crime than it was a blunder. Having been condemned by this unique Court, he was, with the most indecent haste, hurried to his end. A revolting coarseness marks every detail of the tragic story ; the flower of England on either side was beneath the turf or beyond the sea, and the management of affairs was left in the hands of butchers and brewers. Ranting sermons, three in succession, before a brewer in Whitehall, are the medium to which the religious utterance of England is reduced, and Ireton and Harrison in bed together, with Cromwell and others in the room, signed the warrant for the fatal act. The horror and indignation which it impressed on the heart of

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the people may be understood a little by the fact, that in no country so much as in England the peculiar sacredness of Monarchy has since been carried so far. The impression caused by his death was so profound, that, forty years afterwards, when his son was arrested in his flight, the only thing that during the whole course of that revolution caused the least reaction in his favour was (according to the Whig Burnet) the fear that the people conceived that the same thing was going to be acted over again, and men remembered that saying of King Charles—‘The prisons of princes are not far from their graves.’ He walked across the Park from the garden at St. James’s that January morning with so firm and quick a pace that the guards could scarcely keep the step, and stepping from his own banqueting-house upon the scaffold, where the men who ruled England so little understood him as to provide ropes and pulleys to drag him down in case of need, he died with that calm and kingly bearing which none could assume so well as he, and by his death he cast a halo of religious sentiment round a cause which, without the final act, would have wanted much of its pathetic charm, and struck that key-note of religious devotion to his person and the Monarchy which has not yet ceased to reverberate in the hearts of men.

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'That thence the royal actor borne
The tragic scaffold might adorn,
While round the armed bands
Did clap their bloody hands :
He nothing common did, nor mean,
Upon that memorable scene ;
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try ;
Nor called the gods with vulgar spite
To vindicate his helpless right,
But bowed his comely head
Down, as upon a bed.'
The Republican, Andrew Marvell.

CHAPTER XV

INGLESANT remained in the Tower for several months after the King's death. The Lords Hamilton, Holland, and Capel were the first who followed their royal master to the block, and many other names of equal honour and little inferior rank followed in the same list. In excuse for the murders of these men there is no other plea than, as in the case of their master—self-preservation. But the purpose was not less abortive than the means were criminal. The effect produced on the country was one of awe and hatred to the ruling powers. Thousands of copies of the King's Book, edged with black, were sold in London within the few days following his death, and Milton was obliged to remonstrate pitifully with the people for their unaccountable attachment to their King. The country, it is true, was for the moment cowed, and, although individual gentlemen took every opportunity to rise against the usurpers, and suffered death willingly in such a cause, the mass of the people remained quiet. The country

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gentlemen indeed were, as a body, ruined ; the head of nearly every family was slain, and the widows and minors had enough to do to arrange, as best they might, with the Government agents who assessed the fines and compositions upon malignants' estates. It required a few years to elapse before England would recover itself, and declare its real mind unmistakably, which it very soon did ; but during those years it never sank into silent acquiescence to the great wrong that had been perpetrated. It is the custom to regard the Commonwealth as a period of great national prosperity and peace. Nothing can be a greater mistake. There never was a moment's peace during the whole of Cromwell's reign of power. He began by destroying that Parliament utterly, for seeking the arrest of five members of which the King lost his crown and was put to death. The best of the Republican party were kept in prison or exiled, just as the King had been seized and executed by Cromwell, independently of the Parliament. But the oppressed sections of the Puritan party never ceased to hate the usurper as much as the Royalists did, and the want of their support insured the fall of the Republic the moment the master hand was withdrawn.

After a few months Inglesant's imprisonment was much lighter ; he was allowed abundance of food, and liberty to walk in the courtyards of the Tower, and was allowed to purchase any books he chose. He had received a sum of

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money from an unknown hand, which he afterwards found to have been that of Lady Cardiff, his brother's wife, and this enabled him to purchase several books and other conveniences. He remained in prison under these altered circumstances until the end of January 1650, when, one morning, his door opened, and without any announcement his brother was admitted to see him. Eustace was much altered : he was richly dressed, entirely in the French mode, his manner and appearance were altogether those of a favourite of the French Court, and he spoke English with a foreign accent. He greeted his brother with great warmth, and it need not be said that Johnny was delighted to see him.

Eustace told his brother at once that he was free, and showed him the warrant for his liberation.

'I was in Paris,' he said, 'on the eve of starting for England on affairs which I will explain to you in a moment, when *votre ami* the Jesuit came to see me. He told me he understood I was going to England on my private affairs, but he thought possible I might not object to do a little service for my brother ; —you know his manner. He said if I would apply in certain quarters, which he named to me, I should find the way prepared, and no difficulties in obtaining your release. The words were true, and yesterday I received this warrant. As soon as it is convenient to you I shall be

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glad for you to leave this sombre place, as I want you to come with me to Oulton, to my wife,—my wife, who is indeed so perfectly English in all her manners, as I shall proceed to explain to you. Since you were at Oulton my wife has been growing worse and worse in health, and more and more eccentric and crotchety; every new remedy and every fresh religious notion she adopts at once. She has filled the house with quacks, of whom Van Helmont is chief, mountebanks, astrologers, and physicians,—a fine collection of beaux-esprits. The last time I was there I could not see her once, though I stayed a fortnight; she was in great misery, extremely ill, and said she was near her last. Since I have been in Paris I have been obliged to give up many of my suppers with the French King and Lords, from her letters saying she was at the point of death. She is ill at present, and no one has seen her these ten days; but I suppose it is much after the same sort; and she sends me word that Van Helmont has promised that she shall not be buried, but preserved by his art till I can come and see her. To crown all, she has lately become a Quaker, and in my family all the women about my wife, and most of the rest, are Quakers, and Mons. Van Helmont is governor of that flock,—an unpleasing sort of people, silent, sullen, and of reserved conversation, though I hear one of the maids is the prettiest

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girl in all the county. These and all that society have free access to my wife, but I believe Dr. More, the Platonist, who is a scholar and gentleman, if an enthusiast, though he was in the house all last summer, did not see her above once or twice. She has been urging me for months to search all over Europe for an eagle's stone, which she says is of great use in such diseases as hers; and when I, at great labour and expense, found her one, she sends back word that it is not one, but that some of her quacks were able to decipher it at once, and that it is a German stone, such as are commonly sold in London at five shillings apiece. I have grown learned in these stones, by which the fairies in our grandfather's time used to preserve the fruits from hail and storms. There is a salamander stone. This eagle stone is one made after a cabalistic art and under certain stars, and engraved with the sign of an eagle. I could prove their virtue to you,' he continued, laughing, 'throughout all arts and sciences, as Divinity, Philosophy, Physic, Astrology, Physiognomy, Divination of Dreams, Painting, Sculpture, Music, and what not. This affair of the stone, and these reports of sickness and death, however, and doleful stories of coffins prepared by art, and of open graves, would not have brought me over, but for another circumstance of much greater moment. When I was in Italy and staying some time at Venice, and

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was desirous of engaging in some of the intrigues and amusements of the city, I was recommended to an Italian, a young man, who made himself useful to several of the nobility, as a man who could introduce me to, and show me more of that kind of pleasure, than any one else. I found him all that had been represented to me, and a great deal more, for, not to tell you too long a story, he was an adept at every sort of intrigue, and was acquainted at any rate with every species of villany and vice that the Italians have conceived. The extent to which they carry these tastes of theirs cannot be described, and from them the wildest of the gallants of the rest of Europe start back amazed. To cut this short, I was very deeply engaged to him, and in return I held some secrets of his, which he would not even now have known. At last, upon some villainous proposal made by him, I drew upon him. We had been dining at one of the Casinos in St. Mark's Place, and I would have run him through the body, but the crowd of mountebanks, charlatans, and such stuff, interposed and saved him. I have often wished since I had. He threatened me highly, but as I was a foreigner and acquainted with most of the principal nobles, he could do me no harm. He endeavoured to have me assassinated more than once, and one Englishman was set upon and desperately wounded in mistake for me ; but by advice I hired bravoës myself who baffled his

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plots, for I had the longest purse. I knew nothing of him afterwards until I heard that he had left Italy, a ruined and desperate man, whose life was sought by many ; and the next thing I heard, not many weeks ago, was that he was at Oulton, having gained admission to my wife as a foreign physician who had some especial knowledge of her disease. She fancies herself much the better for his nostrums, and gives herself entirely to his directions, and I believe he professes Quakerism, or some sort of foreign mysticism allied to it, which has established him with the rest of her confidants. I no sooner heard this pleasing information than I resolved to come over to England at once, and at least drive away this villain from my family, even if I had no other way to do it than by running him through the body, as I might have done in Italy. I, however, sent a messenger to my wife to inform her that I was coming, and on my reaching London a few days ago, I found him waiting for me with a packet from Oulton. In a letter my wife desires me earnestly not to come to Oulton to see her, as she is assured by good hands that some imminent danger awaits me if I do, and she encloses this horoscope, which no doubt one of her astrologers has prepared for her. Now I have no doubt the Italian is at the bottom of all this, and that, at his instigation, the horoscope has been drawn out ; yet I confess that it appears to me to have

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something about it that looks like the truth, something beyond what would be written at the instigation of an enemy. You can read it and judge for yourself. I have dabbled a little in astrology as in other arts.'

John Inglesant took the paper from his brother and examined it carefully. At the top was an astrological scheme, or drawing of the heavens, taken at some moment when the intention of Eustace to come to Oulton had first become known to his wife. Beneath was the judgment of the adept, in the following words :—

'Saturn, the significator of the quesited, being in conjunction with Venus, I judge him to have gained by ladies to a considerable extent, to be much attached to them, greatly addicted to pleasure, and very fortunate where females are concerned, and to be a man of property. The significator being affected both by Mercury, lord of the eighth in the figure, and also by Mars, the lord of the quesited's eighth house, and the aspect of separation of the moon being bad,—namely, conjunction of Jupiter and square of Mercury, who is ill aspected to Jupiter, and is going to a square of the sun on the cusp of the mid-heaven,—I judge that the quesited is in imminent danger of death ; and the lord of the third house being in the eighth, and the significator being combust, in conjunction with the lord of the eighth, and the hyleg afflicted by

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the evil planets, makes it more certain. His significator being in the eleventh house denotes that at the present time he is well situated and with some near friend (I should judge, as he is well aspected with the moon, the lady of the third house, a brother), and happy. Mars being in the ascendant, and the cusp of the first house wanting only three degrees of the place of the evil planet in a common sign, I judge the time of death to occur in three weeks' time, and that it will be caused by a sword or dagger wound, by which Mars kills. The danger lies to the south-west—south, because the quarter of the heaven where the lord of the ascendant is, is south—west, because the sign where he is, is west.'

John Inglesant read this paper two or three times, and returned it to his brother with a smile. 'I should not be greatly alarmed at it,' said he: 'that is not a true horoscope, or rather it is a true horoscope tampered with. The man who erected the scheme, I should say, was an honest man, though not a very clever astrologer. It has, however, as most schemes have, a glimmering of a truth not otherwise known (you and I being together, which no one at Oulton could have thought of, though you see he was wrong as to the time); but some other hand has been at work upon the judgment, and a very unskilful one. It contradicts itself. What is most important, however, is that the

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artist has no ground to take Saturn for your significator, which should be either the lord of the third house, the cusp of the third, or the planets therein, neither of which Saturn is. Besides, he takes the place of Fortune to be hyleg, for which he has no ground. He has taken Saturn as significator, as suiting what he knows of your character, and I think there is no doubt the Italian's hand is in this. Now I should rather say that Venus, the lady of the third, being significator, and applying to a friendly trine of Jupiter, lord of the ascendant, and Saturn being retrograde, and Venus also casting a sextile to the cusp of the ascendant is a very good argument that the querent should see the quesited speedily, and that in perfect health. I would have you think no more of this rubbish, with which a wicked man has tried to make the heavens themselves speak falsely.'

'I did not know you were so good an astrologer, Johnny,' said his brother.

'Father St. Clare taught it me among other things,' said Inglesant; 'and I have seen many strange answers that he has known himself; but it is shameful that the science should be made a tool of by designing men.'

Eustace returned the papers to his pockets, and requested his brother again to prepare to leave the Tower at once. After taking leave of the Lieutenant, and seeing the warders, the two brothers departed in a coach in which

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Eustace had come to the Tower, and went to the lodgings of the latter in Holborn. Eustace furnished his brother with clothes until he could procure some for himself, and gave him money liberally, of which he seemed to have no stint. He wished his brother to come with him to all the places of resort in the city, but John prudently declined. Indeed, the city was so quiet and dull, that few places of amusement remained. The theatres were entirely closed. Whitehall was sombre and nearly empty, and the public walks were filled only with the townspeople in staid and sober attire. The two brothers were therefore reduced to each other's society, and it seemed as though absence or a sense of danger united them with a warmth of affection which they had seldom before known.

To John Inglesant, who had always been devotedly attached to his brother, this display of affection was delightful, cut off as he had been so long from all sympathy and friendliness. Dressed in his brother's clothes, the likeness which had once been so striking returned again, and as they walked the streets people turned to look at them with surprise. The brothers felt in their hearts old feelings and thoughts returning, which had long been forgotten and had passed away ; and to John Inglesant especially, always given to half melancholy musings and brooding over the past, all his happiest recol-

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lections seemed to concentrate themselves on his brother, the last human relation that seemed left to him, since he had, as he thought, lost the favour of all his friends, relations, and acquaintances in the world. Possibly a sense of a great misfortune made this sentiment more tender and acute, for, as we shall see, there were some things in his brother's position, and in the horoscope he had shown him, which Inglesant did not like. At present, however, his whole nature, so long crushed down and lacerated, seemed to expand and heal itself in the light of his brother's love and person, and to concentrate all its powers into one intense feeling, and to lose its own identity in this passion of brotherly regard.

This feeling might also be increased by his own state of health, which made him cling closer to any support. His long imprisonment, and the sudden change from his quiet cell to all the bustle of the city life, affected his mind and brain painfully. He was confused and excited among a crowd of persons and objects to which he had been so long unaccustomed; his brain and system had received a shock from which he never entirely recovered, and, for some time at any rate, he walked as one who is in a dream, rather than as a man engaged in the active pursuits of life.

After two or three days Eustace told his brother one morning that he was ready to go

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into the West, but before starting he said he wished Johnny to accompany him to a famous astrologer in Lambeth Marsh, to whom already he had shown the horoscope, and who had appointed a meeting that night to give his answer, and who had also promised to consult a crystal, as an additional means of obtaining information of the future.

Accordingly, late in the afternoon, they took a wherry at the Temple Stairs, and were ferried over to Lambeth Marsh, a wide extent of level ground between Southwark and the Bishop's Palace, on which only a few straggling houses had been built. The evening was dark and foggy, and a cold wind swept across the marsh, making them wrap their short cloaks closely about them. It was almost impossible to see more than a yard or two before them, and they would probably have found great difficulty in finding the wizard's house had not a boy with a lantern met them a few paces from the river, who inquired if they were seeking the astrologer. This was the wizard's own boy, whom, with considerable worldly prudence at any rate, he had despatched to find his clients and bring them to his house. The boy brought them into a long low room, with very little furniture in it, a small table at the upper end, with a large chair behind it, and three or four high-backed chairs placed along the wall. On the floor, in the middle of the room, was a large

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double circle, but there were no figures or signs of any kind about it. On the table was a long thin rod. A lamp which hung from the roof over the table cast a faint light about the room, and a brazier of lighted coals stood in the chimney.

The astrologer soon entered the room with the horoscope Eustace had left with him in his hand. He was a fine-looking man, with a serious and lofty expression of face, dressed in a black gown, with the square cap of a divine, and a fur hood or tippet. He bowed courteously to the gentlemen, who saluted him with great respect. His manner was coldest to John Inglesant, whom he probably regarded with suspicion as an amateur. He, however, acknowledged that Inglesant's criticisms on the horoscope were correct, but pointed out to him that in his own reading of it many of the aspects were very adverse. John Inglesant knew this, though he had chosen to conceal it from his brother. The astrologer then informed them that he had drawn out a scheme of the heavens himself at the moment when first consulted by Eustace, and that, in quite different ways, and by very different aspects, much the same result had been arrived at. 'As, however,' he went on to say, 'the whole question is to some extent vitiated by the suspicion of foul play, and it will be impossible for any of us to free our minds entirely from these suspicions, I do not advise

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any farther inquiry ; but I propose that you should consult a consecrated beryl or crystal—a mode of inquiry far more high and certain than astrology, so much so, indeed, that I will seriously confess to you that I use the latter but as the countenance and blind ; but this search in the crystal is by the help of the blessed spirits, and is open only to the pure from sin, and to men of piety, humility, and charity.’

As he said these words he produced from the folds of his gown a large crystal or polished stone, set in a circle of gold, supported by a silver stand. Round the circle were engraved the names of angels. He placed this upon the table, and continued,—

‘ We must pray to God that He will vouchsafe us some insight into this precious stone ; for it is a solemn and serious matter upon which we are, second only to that of communication with the angelical creatures themselves, which, indeed, is vouchsafed to some, but only to those of the greatest piety, to which we may not aspire. Therefore let us kneel down and humbly pray to God.’

They all knelt, and the adept, commencing with the Prayer-book collect for the festival of St. Michael, recited several other prayers, all for extreme and spotless purity of life.

He then rose, the two others continuing on their knees, and struck a small bell, upon which the boy whom they had before seen entered the

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room by a concealed door in the wainscot. He was a pretty boy, with a fair and clean skin, and was dressed in a surplice similar to those worn by choristers. He took up a position by the crystal, and waited his master's orders.

‘I have said,’ continued the adept, ‘that these visions can be seen only by the pure, and by those who, by long and intense looking into the spiritual world, have at last penetrated somewhat into its gloom. I have found these mostly to be plain and simple people, of an earnest faith,—country people, grave-diggers, and those employed to shroud the dead, and who are accustomed to think much upon objects connected with death. This boy is the child of the sexton of Lambeth Church, who is himself a godly man. Let us pray to God.’

Upon this he knelt down again and remained for some time engaged in silent prayer. He then rose and directed the boy to look into the crystal, saying, ‘One of these gentlemen desires news of his wife.’

The boy looked intently into the crystal for some moments, and then said, speaking in a measured and low voice,—

‘I see a great room, in which there is a bed with rich hangings; pendent from the ceiling is a silver lamp. A tall dark man, with long hair, and a dagger in his belt, is bending over the bed with a cup in his hand.’

‘It is my wife's room,’ said Eustace in a

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whisper, 'and it is no doubt the Italian ; he is tall and dark.'

The boy continued to look for some time into the crystal, but said nothing ; then he turned to his master and said, 'I can see nothing ; some one more near to this gentleman must look ; this other gentleman,' he said suddenly, and turning to John Inglesant, 'if he looks, will be able to see.'

The astrologer started. 'Ah !' he said, 'why do you say that, boy ?'

'I can tell who will see aught in the crystal, and who will not,' replied the boy ; 'this gentleman will see.'

The astrologer seemed surprised and sceptical, but he made a sign to Inglesant to rise from his knees, and to take his place by the crystal.

He did so, and looked steadily into it for some seconds, then he shook his head.

'I can see nothing,' he said.

'Nothing !' said the boy ; 'can you see nothing ?'

'No. I see clouds and mist.'

'You have been engaged,' said the boy, 'in something that was not good—something that was not true ; and it has dimmed the crystal sight. Look steadily, and if it is as I think, that your motive was not false, you will see more.'

Inglesant looked again ; and in a moment or two gave a start, saying,—'The mist is

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breaking ! I see ;—I see a large room, with a chimney of carved stone, and a high window at the end ; in the window and on the carved stone is the same coat many times repeated—three running greyhounds proper, on a field vert.'

'I know the room,' said Eustace ; 'it is the inn parlour at Mintern, not six miles from Oulton. It was the manor of the Vinings before the wars, but is now an inn ; that was their coat.'

'Do you see aught else ?' said the adept.

Inglesant gave a long look ; then he stepped back, and gazed at the astrologer, and from him to his brother, with a faltering and ashy look.

'I see a man's figure lie before the hearth, and the hearth-stone is stained, as if with blood. Eustace, it is either you or I !'

'Look again,' said the adept eagerly, 'look again !'

'I will look no more !' said Inglesant fiercely ; 'this is the work of a fiend, to lure men to madness or despair !'

As he spoke, a blast of wind—sudden and strong—swept through the room ; the lamp burnt dim ; and the fire in the brazier went out. A deathly coldness filled the apartment, and the floor and the walls seemed to heave and shake. A loud whisper, or muffled cry, seemed to fill the air ; and a terrible awe struck at the hearts of the young men.

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Seizing the rod from the table, the adept assumed a commanding attitude, and waved it to and fro in the air ; gradually the wind ceased, the dread coldness abated, and the fire burned again of its own accord. The adept gazed at Inglesant with a stern and set look.

‘You are of a strange spirit, young sir,’ he said ; ‘pure in heart enough to see things which many holy men have desired in vain to see ; and yet so wild and rebellious as to anger the blessed spirits with your self-will and perverse thoughts. You will suffer fatal loss, both here and hereafter, if you learn not to give up your own will, and your own fancies, before the heavenly will and call.’

Inglesant stared at the man in silence. His words seemed to him to mean far more than perhaps he himself knew. They seemed to come into his mind, softened with anxiety for his brother, and shaken by these terrible events, with the light of a revelation. Surely this was the true secret of his wasted life, however strange might be the place and action which revealed it to him. Whatever he might think afterwards of this night, it might easily stand to him as an allegory of his own spirit, set down before him in a figure. Doubtless he was perverse and headstrong under the pressure of the Divine Hand ; doubtless he had followed his own notions rather than the voice of the inward monitor he professed to hear ; hence-

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forth, surely, he would give himself up more entirely to the heavenly voice.

Eustace appeared to have seen enough of the future, and to be anxious to go. He left a purse of gold upon the wizard's table; and hurried his brother to take his leave.

Outside the air was perfectly still; a thick motionless fog hung over the marsh and the river; not a breath of wind stirred.

'That was a strange wind that swept by as you refused to look,' said Eustace to his brother; 'do you really think the spirits were near, and were incensed?'

Inglesant did not reply; he was thinking of another spirit than that the wizard had evoked.

They made their way through the fog to Lambeth, and took boat again to the Temple Stairs.

CHAPTER XVI

THE next morning, when the brothers awoke and spoke to each other of the events of the night, Eustace did not seem to have been much impressed by them : he ridiculed the astrologer, and made light of the visions in the crystal ; he, however, acknowledged to his brother that it might be better to avoid the inn parlour at Mintern, and said they might reach Oulton by another route.

‘There is a road,’ he said, ‘after you leave Cern Abbas, which turns off five or six miles before you come to Mintern ; it is not much farther, but it is not so good a road, and not much frequented. It will be quite good enough for us, however, and will not delay us above an hour. But I own I feel ashamed of taking it.’

John Inglesant, however, encouraged him to do so ; and towards middle day they left London on the Windsor Road. Inglesant noticed as they started, that his brother’s favourite servant was absent, and asked his brother where he was. He replied that he had sent him forward early

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in the morning to inform his wife of their coming.

‘I would not have let them know of your intentions,’ said Johnny.

Eustace shrugged his shoulders with a peculiar gesture, saying in French,—

‘It is not convenient for me to come into my family unannounced. I do not know what I might find going forward.’

Johnny thought that his brother had bought his fortune rather dear ; but he said nothing more upon the subject.

They slept that night at Windsor, and hoped to have reached Andover the next day ; but their servants’ horses, and those with the mails, were not equal to so long a distance, and they slept at Basingstoke, not being able to get farther. The weather was pleasant for the season, and to Inglesant especially—so long confined within stone walls—the journey was very agreeable. It reminded him of his ride up to London with the Jesuit long ago when a boy, when everything was new and delightful to him, and the future open and promising. The way had then been enlivened and every interest doubled by the conversation of his friend, who had known how to extract interest and amusement from the most trivial incidents ; but it was not less made pleasant now by the society of his brother. A great change seemed to be coming over Eustace. He was affectionate and serious. He spoke

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much of past years, of their grandfather, and of the old life at Westacre ; of his early Court life, before Johnny came to London, and of the day when he came down to Westacre with his father and the Jesuit, and saw his brother again. He asked Johnny much about his own life, and listened attentively to all Inglesant thought proper to tell him of his religious inquiries. He asked about the Ferrars, and told Inglesant some of the things that had been said at Court about him and them. A sense of danger—even though it made little impression upon him—seemed to have called forth kindly feelings which had been latent before ; or perhaps some foreboding sense hung over him, and—by a gracious Providence—fitted and tuned his mind for an approaching fate. Inglesant felt his heart drawn towards him with an intensity which he had never felt before. The whole world seemed for the time to be centred in this brother ; and he looked forward to life associated with him.

They slept at Andover ; and the next day made a shorter journey to Salisbury, where they slept again. The stately Cathedral was closed and melancholy-looking, and knowing no one in the town, they passed the long evening alone in the inn. The next morning early they set out. They halted at Cern Abbas about one o'clock, and dined. Eustace made some inquiries about the road he had mentioned to his brother, but

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seemed more and more unwilling to take it, and it required all Inglesant's persuasion to keep him to his promise. The people at the inn seemed surprised that any one should think of taking it, and made out that the delay would be very great, and the chance of missing the way altogether not a little. At this, however, Eustace laughed, saying that he knew the country very well. Indeed his desire to show the truth of this assertion rather assisted his brother's purpose, and they left Cern Abbas with the full intention of taking the unusual route. The country was thickly wooded, many parts of the ancient forest remaining, and here and there rather hilly. In descending one of these hills John Inglesant's horse cast a shoe, just as they reached the point where the two roads diverged, the right hand one of which they were to take. As it was impossible for them to proceed with the horse as it was, John proposed sending it back with one of the servants to Cern Abbas, and taking the man's horse instead, who could easily follow them. As they were about to put in practice this scheme, however, one of the men said there was a forge about a mile beyond, on the road before them, where it would be easy to get the shoe put on. Eustace immediately approved of this plan, and John was obliged at last reluctantly to yield. It seemed to him as though the impending fate came nearer and nearer at every step. The man

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proved himself to be an uncertain guide as to distance, and it was fully two miles before they reached the forge. When they reached it they found that a gentleman's coach, large and unwieldy, had broken some portion of its complicated machinery, and was taxing all the efforts of the smith and his assistants to repair it. The gentlemen dismounted and accosted the two ladies who had alighted from the coach, and whom Eustace remembered to have met before at Dorchester. The coach was soon mended, and the ladies drove off; but by this time Eustace had grown impatient, and, saying carelessly to his brother, 'You will follow immediately,' he mounted and turned his horse's head still along the main road, his men mounting also.

'You are not going on that way,' said Johnny; 'you said we should turn back to the other road.'

'Oh, we cannot turn back now,' said his brother; 'we have come farther than I expected. We will not stop at Mintern,' he added significantly.

And so saying he rode away after the carriage, followed by his men.

Inglesant looked after him anxiously, a heavy foreboding filling his mind. He saw his brother mount the little hill before the forge, between the bare branches of the trees on either side of the road; then a slight turn of the way con-

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cealed him, but, for a moment or two more, he could see glimpses of the figures as the leafless boughs permitted, then, when he could see even these no longer, he went back into the forge. It was some ten minutes before the horse was ready, and then Inglesant himself mounted, and rode off quickly after his brother. He had felt all the day, and during the one preceding it, a weariness and dulness of sense, the result, no doubt, of fatigue acting upon his only partially recovered health, and on a frame shattered by what he had gone through. As he rode on, his brain became more and more confused, so that for some moments together he was almost unconscious, and only by an effort regained his sense of passing events. The woods seemed to pass by him as in a dream, the thick winter air to hang about him like the heavy drapery of a pall, whether he was sleeping or waking he could scarcely tell. What added to his distress was an abiding sense of crisis and danger to his brother, which required him at that moment, above all others, to exert a strength and a prescience of which he felt himself becoming more and more incapable. He was continually making violent efforts to retain his recollection of what was passing and of what it behoved him to do,—efforts which each time became more and more painful, and of the futility of which he became more and more despairingly conscious. Words

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cannot describe the torture of such a condition as this.

At last he overtook some of his brother's servants with the led horses, whom he scarcely recognized, so far were his senses obscured. Their master had ridden on before with two servants, they told him ; he would have to ride hard to overtake them. He seemed eager, they said, to be at home. Inglesant could scarcely sit his horse, much less expect to overtake his brother—who was well mounted and an impetuous rider—nevertheless he gave his horse the spur, and the animal, also a good roadster, soon left the servants far behind. The confusion of mind which he suffered increased more and more as he rode along, and the events of his past life came up before his eyes as clearly and palpably as the objects through which he was riding, so that he could not distinguish the real from the imaginary, the present from the past, which added extremely to his distress. He stood again amid the confusion and carnage of Naseby field ; once more he saw the throng of heads, and heard that terrible cry that had welcomed him to the scaffold ; again he looked into the fatal crystal, and strange visions and ghostly shapes of death and corruption came out from it, and walked to and fro along the hedgerows and across the road before him, making terrible the familiar English fields ; a tolling of the passing bell rang continually in

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his ear, and his horse's footfalls sounded strange and funereal to his diseased sense. He knew nothing of the road, nor of what happened as he rode along, nor what people he passed ; but he missed the direct turning, and reached Mintern at last by another lane which led him some distance round. The servants with the led horses were there before him, standing before the inn door, and other strange servants in his brother's liveries and several horses stood about.

The old manor that was now an inn stood close to the Church, at the opening of the village, with a little green before it and a wall, in the centre of which was a pair of gates flanked with pillars. The iron gates were closed, but the wall had been thrown down for some yards on either side, thus giving ample access to the house within. It was a handsome house with a large high window over the porch, in the upper panes of which Inglesant could see coats of arms. Amid the tracery of the iron gates running greyhounds were interlaced.

John Inglesant saw all this as in a dream, and he saw besides creatures that were not real, walking among the living men ; haggard figures in long robes, and others beneath the grave shrouds, ghostly phantoms of his disordered brain. He made a desperate effort for the hundredth time to clear his sense of these terrible distracting sights, of this death of the brain that

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disabled all his faculties, and for the hundredth time in vain. It appeared to him—whether it was a vision or a reality, he did not know—that one of his brother's servants came to his horse's side, and told him something of a gentleman of his lady's, a foreign physician, having met his master purposely, and that they were within together. Inglesant dismounted mechanically and entered the hotel, telling the servant to come with him. He had some dim feeling of dragging his brother away from a great danger, and a desire of gathering about him, if he could but distinguish them, such as would assist him and were of human flesh and blood. Inside the porch, and in the narrow hall beyond, the place swarmed with these distracting visions walking to and fro; the staircase at the farther end was crowded with them going up and down. He saw, as he thought, his brother, attended by a dark, handsome man, in the gown of a physician, come down the stairs to meet him, but when they came nearer they dissolved themselves and vanished into air.

The host came to meet him, saying that his brother and the foreign gentleman were upstairs in the parlour; he had thought they were having some words a while ago, but they were quiet now. The whole house, Inglesant thought, was deadly quiet, though seemingly to him so full of life. To what terrible deed were all these strange witnesses and assistants

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summoned? He told the host to follow him as he had told the man before; and he did so, supposing he meant to order something. They went up the two flights of the oak stairs, and entered the room over the hall and porch. It was a large and narrow room, and was seemingly empty. Opposite them, in the high window, and on the great carved chimney to the right, running greyhounds coursed each other, as it seemed to Inglesant, round the room. A long table hid the hearth as they came in. With a fatal certainty, as if mechanically, Inglesant walked round it towards the fire, the others with him; there they stopped—sudden and still. On the white hearthstone—his hair and clothes steeped in blood—lay Eustace Inglesant, the Italian's stiletto in his heart.

CHAPTER XVII

THE sight of his brother's corpse seemed to steady Inglesant's nerves, and clear his brain. He turned to the host, and said, 'What way can the murderer have escaped?'

The host shook his head; he was incapable of speech, or even thought. The three men stood looking at each other without a word. Then Inglesant knelt down by the body, and raised the head; there was no doubt that life was extinct—indeed, the body must have been nearly drained of blood; the fine line of steel had done its work fully, and with no loss of time. Inglesant rose from the ground; his sight, his recollection, his senses were speedily failing him; nothing kept him conscious but the terrible shock acting with galvanic effect upon his frame. The back of the premises was searched, and mounted messengers were sent to the neighbouring towns and to the cross roads, and notice sent to the nearest Justice of the Peace. The country rose in great numbers, and came pouring in to Mintern before the

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early evening set in. The body was deposited on the long table in the parlour where the deed was committed ; and more than one Justice examined the room that afternoon. Inglesant saw that the guard was set, and proper care taken ; and then he mounted to ride to Oulton. He was not fit to ride ; but to stay in the house all night was impossible—to lie down equally so. In the night air he rode to Oulton, through the long wild chase, by the pools of water—from which the flocks of birds rose startled as he passed, and by the herds of deer. The ride settled his nerves, and when he reached the house he was still master of himself. The news had preceded him ; Lady Cardiff was said to be in a paroxysm of grief ; but, as no one had seen her for days except her immediate servants, Inglesant did not attempt to obtain an interview with her. He was received by Dr. More and the superior servants, and sat down to supper. Not a word was spoken during that sombre meal except by the Doctor, who pressed Inglesant to eat and drink, and offered to introduce him to Van Helmont, who was not present. The Doctor said grace after supper ; but when he had done, one of the female servants, a Quakeress, stood up and spoke some words recommending patience and a feeling after God, if perchance He might be found to be present, and a help in such a terrible need. The singularity of this proceeding roused Inglesant from

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the lethargy in which he was, and the words seemed to strike upon his heart with a familiar and not uncongenial sense. The mystical doctrine which he had studied was not unlike much that he would hear from Quaker lips. He went to his room after supper, intending to rise early next morning ; but before daybreak he was delirious and in a high fever, and Van Helmont was sent for to his room, and bled him freely, and administered cordials and narcotic draughts. The skilful treatment caused him to sleep quietly for many hours ; and when he awoke, though prostrate with weakness, he was free from fever, and his brain was calm and clear.

From inquiries which he made, it appeared that the Italian had been making preparations for leaving for several days, probably doubting the success of his attempt to win over Eustace to tolerate his continued stay at Oulton. Inglesant was told that it was supposed that he had not intended to murder his brother ; but that Eustace had probably threatened him, and that in the heat of contention the blow was struck. The Italian had destroyed all his papers, and everything that could give any clue to his conduct or history ; but he had left a very bad reputation behind him, independently of his last murderous act ; and his influence with Lady Cardiff was attributed to witchcraft.

The funeral of Eustace Inglesant took place a few days after, at the Church on the borders of

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the chase. Snow had fallen in the meanwhile ; and the train of black mourners passed over the waste of white that covered the park. A multitude of people filled the churchyard, and crowded round the outside of the hall. Lady Cardiff, by lavish almsgiving and other vagaries, had always attracted a number of vagrant and masterless people to Oulton ; and there were always some encampments of such people in the chase. She particularly favoured mountebanks and quacks of all kinds, and numbers of them were present at the funeral. Some few of the country gentry attended ; but Eustace being almost unknown in the country, and his wife by no means popular, many who otherwise would have been present were not so. The Puritan authorities of the neighbourhood suspected Lady Cardiff's establishments as a haunt of recusants. Dr. More was a known Royalist ; Eustace had been only restrained from active exertion on the same side by his love of pleasure and his wife's prudence ; and the Puritans regarded the Quakers with no favour. The herd of idle and vicious people, as the authorities considered them, who frequented Oulton, was an abomination in their eyes ; and understanding that a number of them would be at the funeral, two or three Puritan magistrates, with armed servants and constables, assembled to keep order, as they said, but, as it proved, to provoke a riot. To make matters worse, Dr. More began to read the Prayer Book.

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service, which was forbidden by law. The Justices interposed; the mob of mountebanks, and players, and idle people, sided with the Church party, which had always given them a friendly toleration, and commenced an assault upon the constables and Justices' servants, driving them from the grave side with a storm of snow-balls. The funeral was completed with great haste, and the mourning party returned to the house, whither the mob also resorted, and were regaled with provisions of all kinds during the afternoon, being with difficulty induced to disperse at night.

Inglesant took no part in this riot, being indeed still too weak and ill to exert himself at all. He expected to be arrested and sent back to London; but the authorities did not take much notice of the riot, contenting themselves with dispersing the people, and seeing that most of them left the neighbourhood, which they were induced to do by being set in the village stocks, and otherwise imprisoned and intimidated.

Lady Cardiff had sent messages to Inglesant every day, expressing her interest in him, and she now sent Van Helmont to him with the information that a large sum of money, which she had assigned to his brother, would now be his. This sum, which amounted to several thousand pounds, she was ready to pay over to Inglesant whenever he might desire it. She hoped he would remain at Oulton till his health

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was more established, but she hinted that she thought it was for his own interest that neither his stay there, nor indeed in England, should be unnecessarily prolonged. Meanwhile, she recommended him to Dr. More and to the Quakers ; the teaching which he would derive from both sources, she assured him, would be much to his benefit. Inglesant returned a courteous message expressive of his obligation for her extraordinary generosity, and assuring her that he should endeavour to benefit by whatever her inmates might communicate to him. He informed her that he intended, as soon as his strength was sufficiently established, to go to Paris, where the only friend he had left was, and that any sum of money she was so generous as to afford him might be transmitted to the merchants there. He had had some thoughts, he said, of going to Gidding, but had learnt that soon after the execution of the King, the house had been attacked by a mob of soldiers and others, and that the family, who had timely warning of their intention, had left the neighbourhood and were dispersed. He concluded by hoping that before he left he might be allowed to thank his benefactress in person.

Some weeks passed over at Oulton with great tranquillity, and Inglesant regained his strength and calmness of mind. There was a large and valuable library in the house, and the society of Dr. More was pleasant to Ingle-

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sant, though in many ways they were far from congenial; indeed, there was more in Van Helmont's character and tastes that suited his tone of mind. During these weeks, however, Inglesant began to adapt himself to a course of religious life from which he never altogether departed, and which, after some doubts and many attempts on the part of others to divert him from it, he followed to the end of his life. He was no doubt strengthened at the beginning of this course by the conversation of Dr. More, and also of the Quakers. These latter, whom Inglesant had been led to regard with aversion, he found harmless and sober people, whose blameless lives, and the elevated mysticism of their conversation, commended them to him.

The transient calm of this existence was, however, broken by one absorbing idea—the desire of being revenged upon his brother's murderer, of tracking the Italian's path, and bringing him to some terrible justice. It was this that induced him to seek the Jesuit, whom at one time he had been inclined to shun. No one, he considered, would have it in his power, from the innumerable agents in every country with whom he had connection, to assist him in his search so much as the Jesuit; and he believed that he had deserved as much at his master's hand. But it was not natural that, at any rate at once, he should suppose that

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such a motive as this would be any hindrance to him in a religious life, and for a long time he was unconscious of any such idea.

It will be as well here to endeavour to understand something of the peculiar form which Christianity had assumed in Inglesant's mind—a form which was not peculiar to himself, but which he possessed in common with most in that day whose training had been more or less similar to his own. It was similar in many respects to that which prevails in the present day in most Roman Catholic countries, and may be described as Christianity without the Bible. It is doubtful whether, except perhaps once or twice in College Chapel, he had ever read a chapter of the Bible himself in his life. Certainly he never possessed a Bible himself; of its contents, excepting those portions which are read in Church and those contained in the Prayer Book, he was profoundly ignorant. It was not included in the course of studies set him by the Jesuit. Of the Protestant doctrines of justification by faith and by the blood of Christ, and of the Calvinistic ones of predestination and assurance, he was only acquainted in a vague and general way, as he might have heard mention of them in idle talk, mostly in contempt and dislike. It is true the Laudian School in the Church, in which he had been brought up, held doctrines which, in outward terms, might seem to bear

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some affinity with some, if not all of these ; but they were in reality very different. The Laudian School held, indeed, that the sacrifice of Christ's blood had removed the guilt of sin, and that by that, and that only, was salvation secured to men ; but they held that this had been accomplished on the Cross, once for all, independently of anything that man could do or leave undone. The very slightest recognition, on the part of man, of this Divine sacrifice, the very least submission to the Church ordinances, combined with freedom from outward sin, was sufficient to secure salvation to the baptized ; and indeed the Church regarded with leniency and hope even the wild and reprobate. It is true that the Laudian press teemed with holy works, setting the highest of pure standards before its readers, and exhorting to the following of a holy life ; but this life was looked upon rather as a spiritual luxury and privilege, to which high and refined natures might well endeavour to attain, rather than as absolutely necessary to salvation. With this view the Church regarded human error with tolerance ; and amusements and enjoyments with approbation, and as deserving the highest sanctions of religion. Inglesant's Christianity, therefore, was ignorant of doctrine and dogma of almost every kind, and concentrated itself altogether on what may be called the Idea of Christ, that is, a lively conception of and attraction to the

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person of the Saviour. This idea,—which comes to men in different ways, and which came to Inglesant for the first time in the sacrament at Gidding, being, I should suppose, a purely intellectual one,—would no doubt be inefficient and transitory, were it not for the unique and mysterious power of attraction which it undoubtedly possesses. In the pursuit of this idea he received little assistance from Dr. More. The school to which the Doctor belonged,—the Christian Platonists,—had no tendency to that exclusive worship of the person of Jesus, which, in some religious schools, has almost superseded the worship of God. This he had received from the Jesuits, and the mystical books of Catholic devotion which had had so great an influence over him. The Jesuits, with all their faults, held fast by the motive of their founder, and the worship of Jesus was by them carried to its fullest extent. Dr. More's theology was more that of a philosophical Deism, into which the person and attributes of Christ entered as a part of an universal scheme, in which the universe, mankind, the all-pervading Spirit of God, and the objects of thought and sense, played distinct and conspicuous parts.

One fine and warm day in the early spring, Inglesant and the Doctor were walking in the garden at the side of the house bordering on the chase and park. The wide expanse of

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grassy upland stretched before them ; overhead the arch of heaven, chequered by the white clouds, was full of life and light and motion ; across the water of the lakes the Church bells, rung for amusement by the village lads, came to the ear softened and yet enriched in tone ; the spring air, fanned by a fresh breeze, refreshed the spirits and the sense. The Doctor began, as upon a favourite theme, to speak of his great sense of the power and benefit of the fresh air.

‘I would always,’ he said, ‘be *sub dio*, if it were possible. Is there anything more delicious to the touch than the soft cool air playing on our heated temples, recruiting and refrigerating the spirits and the blood ? I can read, discourse, or think nowhere as well as in some arbour, where the cool air rustles through the moving leaves ; and what a rapture of mind does such a scene as this always inspire within me ! To a free and divine spirit how lovely, how magnificent, is this state for the soul of man to be in, when, the life of God inactuating her, she travels through heaven and earth, and unites with, and after a sort feels herself the life and soul of this whole world, even as God ! This indeed is to become Deiform—not by imagination, but by union of life. God doth not ride me whither I know not, but discourseth with me as a friend, and speaks to me in such a dialect as I can under-

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stand fully,—namely, the outward world of His creatures ; so that I am in fact *Incola cæli in terrâ*, an inhabitant of paradise and heaven upon earth ; and I may soberly confess that sometimes, walking abroad after my studies, I have been almost mad with pleasure,—the effect of nature upon my soul having been inexpressibly ravishing, and beyond what I can convey to you.'

Inglesant said that such a state of mind was most blessed and much to be desired ; but that few could hope to attain to it, and to many it would seem a fantastic enthusiasm.

'No,' said the Doctor, 'I am not out of my wits, as some may fondly interpret me, in this divine freedom ; but the love of God compelleth me ; and though you yourself know the extent of fancy, when phantoms seem real external objects, yet here the principle of my opponents, the Quakers (who, it may be, are nearer to the purity of Christianity—for the life and power of it—than many others), is the most safe and reasonable,—to keep close to the Light within a man.'

'You agree with the Quakers, then, in some points ?' said Inglesant.

'They have indeed many excellent points, and very nobly Christian, which I wish they would disencumber from such things as make them seem so uncouth and ridiculous ; but the reason our lady has taken so to them as to

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change some of her servants for Quakers, and to design to change more, is that they prove lovers of quiet and retirement, and they fit the circumstances that she is in, that cannot endure any noise, better than others ; for the weight of her affliction lies so heavy upon her, that it is incredible how very seldom she can endure any one in her chamber ; and she finds them so still, quiet, and serious, that their company is very acceptable to her ; and she is refreshed by the accounts of their trials and consolations, and their patience and support under great distress. Baron Van Belmont frequents their meetings.'

'What do you think of the Baron ?'

'I think he knows as little of himself, truly and really, as one who had never seen him in his life.'

Inglesant did not try to penetrate into this oracular response ; but said,—

'Have you seen Mr. Fox, the famous Quaker ?'

'Yes ; I saw him once,' replied the Doctor ; 'and in conversation with him I felt myself, as it were, turned into brass, so much did his spirit and perversity oppress mine.'

'There are some men,' the Doctor went on, after a pause—but Inglesant did not know of whom he was thinking—'that by a divine sort of fate are virtuous and good, and this to a very great and heroical degree ; and come into the world rather for the good of others, and by a

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divine force, than through their own proper fault, or any immediate or necessary congruity of their natures. All which is agreeable to that opinion of Plato, that some descend hither to declare the being and nature of the gods, and for the greater health, purity, and perfection of this lower world. I would fain believe, Mr. Inglesant,' he continued, to the other's great surprise, 'that you are one of those. Ever since I first saw you I have had some thought of this ; and the more I see of you the more I hope and believe that some such work as this is reserved for you. You have, what is very happy for you, what I call an ethereal sort of body—to use the Pythagoric phrase—even in this life, a mighty purity and plenty of the animal spirits, which you may keep lucid by that conduct and piety by which you may govern yourself. And this makes it all the more incumbent on you to have a great care to keep in order this luciform vehicle of the soul, as the Platonists call it ; for there is a sanctity of body which the sensually-minded do not so much as dream of. And this divine body should be cultivated as well as the divine life ; for by how much any person partakes more of righteousness and virtue, he hath also a greater measure of this divine body or celestial matter within himself ; he throws off the baser affections of the earthly body, and replenishes his inner man with so much larger draughts of ethereal or celestial matter ; and to

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incite you still more to this effort, you have only to consider that the oracle of God is not to be heard but in His holy temple, that is to say, in a good and holy man, thoroughly sanctified in spirit, soul, and body.'

CHAPTER XVIII

SHORTLY after the conversation recorded in the previous chapter, Inglesant, who appeared completely restored to health,—thanks to the Baron Van Helmont and to rest of body,—left Oulton, and, without going to London, went to Rye, and sailed thence to France, where he arrived about the middle of May 1651. He had taken a passage in a vessel sailing to Dieppe, and from thence he posted to Paris, this route being thought much safer than the one through Calais, which was much infested by robbers.

He found Paris full of the fugitive Royalists in a state of distress and destitution, which was so great, that on the Queen of England's going to St. Germain's on one occasion, her creditors threatened to arrest her coach. The young King Charles was in Scotland, previous to his march into England, which terminated in the battle of Worcester. Inglesant was well received by the Royalists to whom he made himself known on his arrival. The Glamorgan negotiations were by this time pretty well understood

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among the Royalists, and Inglesant's conduct fairly well appreciated. He had the reputation of being a useful and trustworthy agent, and as such was well received by the heads of the party. He presented himself at the Louvre, where the Queen was, who received him graciously, and expressed a wish that he would remain in Paris, as she had been speaking not many days ago with Father St. Clare concerning him. Inglesant inquired where the Jesuit was, and was told, at St. Germain's with the French Court, and that he would be in Paris again shortly. After leaving the Queen, Inglesant applied to the merchants with whom his money was to have been lodged ; but found that by some misunderstanding a much smaller sum had arrived than he had expected. Such as it was, however, he was able from it to make advances to the Royalist gentlemen, many of whom of the highest rank were in absolute distress ; and he even advanced a considerable sum indirectly to the Queen, and, through the Duke of Ormond, to the young Duke of Gloucester.

It is not necessary to enter into any details with regard to the state of France or the French Court at that time. The Court had been obliged to leave Paris some time before, owing to the violence of the populace, and was at present much embarrassed from the same cause. It was therefore quite unable to afford any help to the distressed fugitives from

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England, had it wished to do so, and even the Queen Henrietta—a daughter of France—could scarcely obtain assistance, and was reduced to the greatest pecuniary distress. The Duke of Ormond parted with his last jewel to procure money for the use of the Duke of Gloucester, whose guardian he was, and the inferior Royalists were reduced to still greater necessities. No sooner, therefore, was it known that Inglesant had means at his disposal, than he became once more a person of the greatest consequence, and every one sought him out, or, if not before acquainted with him, desired an introduction. He frequented the Chapel of Sir Richard Browne, who had been ambassador from Charles the First, and still retained his privileges, his chapel, and his household, being accredited from the young fugitive King to the French Court. This was the only Anglican place of worship in Paris, or indeed at that time, perhaps, in the world. Ordinations were performed there, and it was frequented by the King and the two young Princes, the Duke of York and the Duke of Gloucester, and by all the Royalist fugitives then in Paris.

Inglesant was the more welcome, as many of the Royalist gentlemen who had any money at all, refused to stay in Paris, where there were so many claims upon them, but went on to other countries, especially Italy. He found many of these gentlemen in a very excited

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state, owing to the efforts of the Queen Mother to discourage the English Church, and to win over perverts to Romanism. The King and the Duke, it is true, received the sacrament in the Ambassador's Chapel, partaking of it together before the other communicants, Lord Biron, Inglesant's old friend, and Lord Wilmot, holding a white cloth before the two Princes; but the Queen Mother was making every effort to pervert the young Duke of Gloucester, and throwing all the weight of her influence and patronage on the side of the Papists. Several of the maids of honour had been discharged shortly before Inglesant's arrival in Paris, for refusing to conform to the Romish Mass. Dr. Cosin, the Dean of Peterborough, a profound Ritualist, but at the same time devoted to the Anglican Church, had preached a sermon in the Chapel comforting and supporting these ladies. Inglesant being with the Queen at the Palais Royal, one morning as she was going to her private mass, was commanded to accompany her; and upon his readily complying, the Queen afterwards spoke to him on the subject of religion, inquiring why he, who had so long been so closely connected with the Catholic Church, did not become one of its members. Inglesant pleaded that the Jesuit, Father St. Clare, had discouraged him from joining the Papists as not convenient in the position in which he had

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been placed. The Queen said that the reasons which actuated the Father did not any longer exist, but that she would wait till she could take his advice ; in the meantime requesting Inglesant to attend the Romish services as much as possible, which he promised to do. As a matter of choice, he preferred the English communion to the mass, but he regarded both as means of sacramental grace, and endeavoured at low mass to bring his mind into the same devout stillness and condition of adoration as at a communion. It would appear that about this time he must have been formally received into the Romish Church, for he confessed and received the sacrament at low mass ; but no mention of the ceremony occurs, and it is possible that the priests received instructions respecting him, while there is clear proof that he attended the services at the Ambassador's Chapel, and once at any rate partook of the sacrament there.

Here he met with Mr. Hobbes, who expressed himself pleased to see him, and entered into long discourses with him respecting the Glamorgan negotiations and the late King's policy generally,—discourses which were very instructive to Inglesant, though he felt a greater repugnance to the man than when he formerly met him in London. The religious thoughts which had filled Inglesant's mind at Oulton were far from forgotten, and when he arrived in

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Paris, his first feeling had been one of dissatisfaction at finding himself at once involved again in political intrigue ; but his affection for the Jesuit, apart from his desire to discover the Italian by his means, made him desire to meet him ; and he continued in Paris, waiting with this intention, when an event occurred which altogether diverted his thoughts.

He spent his time in many ways,—partly in acts of religion, partly in studies, frequenting several lectures, both in letters and in science, such as Mons. Febus's course of chemistry. He also frequented the tennis court in the Rue Verdelet, where the King of England, and the princes and nobles, both of that country and of France, amused themselves. He had been at this latter place one morning, and something having happened to prevent the gentleman who had arranged to play the match from appearing, Inglesant, who was a good tennis player, had been requested to take his place against Mons. Saumeurs, the great French player. There was a large and brilliant attendance to watch the play, and Inglesant exerted himself to the utmost, so much so, that he earned the applause and thanks of the company for the brilliant match played before them. Having at last been beaten, which occurred probably when the great player considered he had afforded sufficient amusement to the spectators, Inglesant turned to leave the court, having re-

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sumed his dress and sword, when he was accosted by an English nobleman whom he very slightly knew; who, no doubt influenced by the applause and attention which Inglesant had excited, asked him to dine with him at a neighbouring place of entertainment. After dinner the gentleman told Inglesant that he was in the habit, together with many other English who wished to perfect their knowledge of French, of resorting to one or other of the convents of Paris, to talk with the ancient sisters, whose business it was to receive strangers, and had several such acquaintances with whom he might 'chat at the grates, for the nuns speak a quaint dialect, and have besides most commonly all the news that passes, which they are ready to discourse upon as long as you choose to listen, whereby you gain a greater knowledge of the most correct and refined manner of speaking of all manner of common and trifling events than you could otherwise gain.' He said that he had received a parcel of English gloves and knives from England the day before, some of which he intended that afternoon taking to one of his 'Devota' (as they call a friend in a convent, he said, in Spain), and would take Inglesant with him if the latter wished to come. Inglesant willingly consented, and they went to a convent of the — in the Rue des Terres Fortes. They found the ancient nun—a little courtly old lady—as amusing and pleasant as

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they expected; and she was on her part apparently equally pleased with Lord Cheney's presents, and with Inglesant's courteous discourse and good French. She invited Inglesant to visit her again, but the next day he received a message which was brought by a servant of the convent, who had found his lodgings with some difficulty through Lord Cheney, requesting him to come to the convent at once. It lay in a retired and rather remote part of the city, and but for his friend's introduction he would never have visited it. Thinking the message somewhat strange, he complied with the request, and in the afternoon found himself again in the convent parlour. The nun came immediately to the grate.

'Ah, monsieur,' she said, 'I am glad that you are come. You think it strange, doubtless, that I should send for you so soon; but I spoke of you last night to an inmate of this house, who is a compatriot of yours, and who, I am sorry to say, is very ill,—nay, I fear at the point of death,—and she told me she had known you very well—ah, very well indeed—in times past; and she entreated me to send to you if I could find out your residence. I only knew of you through Milord Chene, but I sent to him.'

'What is this lady's name, madame?' said Inglesant, who, even then, did not guess who it was.

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‘Ah, her name,’ said the nun; ‘her name is Collette—Mademoiselle Marie Collette.’

She had the door in the grate opened for Inglesant, and took him through the house, and past a court planted with trees, to a small and quiet room overlooking the distant woodlands. There, upon a little bed—her face white, her hands and form wasted to a shadow, only her wonderful eyes the same as ever—lay Mary Collet, her face lighting up and her weak hands trembling as he came in. On his knees by the bedside, his face buried in his hands, her white fingers playing over his hair, Inglesant could not speak, dare not even look up. The old nun looked on kindly for some few minutes, and then left them.

Mary was the first to speak, and as she spoke, Inglesant raised his head and fixed his eyes on hers, keeping down the torrent of grief that all but mastered him as he might.

She spoke to him of her joy at seeing him—she so lonely and lost in a foreign land, separated from all her friends and family,—not knowing indeed where they were; of the sufferings and hardships she had passed through since they had left Gidding—hardships which had caused the fever of which she lay dying as she spoke. She had come to Paris after parting from her uncle in Brittany, where they had suffered much deprivation with the Lady Blount, and had been received into this convent, where she had meant to take

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the veil ; but the fever grew upon her, and the physicians at last gave her no hope of recovery. There she had lain day after day, tended by the kind nuns with every care, yet growing weaker and more weary—longing for some voice or face of her own country or of former days. While she had been well enough to listen, the nuns had told her all the little scraps of news relating to her own countrymen and to the Queen which had reached them ; but Inglesant's arrival was not likely to be among these, and Mary had heard nothing of his being in Paris till the night before, when the kindly old nun, finding her a little better than usual, had thought to amuse her by speaking of the pleasant young Englishman who spoke French so well, and whose half foreign name she could easily remember, and who, Lord Cheney had told her, had been one of the most faithful servants of the poor murdered King.

The start of the dying girl before her, her flushed face as she raised herself in bed and threw herself into her friend's arms, entreating her that this old friend, the dearest friend she had ever known—ah ! dearer now than ever—might be sent for at once while she had life and strength to speak to him, showed the nun that this was yet again a reacting of that old story that never tires a woman's heart. The nuns were not strict—far from it—and, even had Mary already taken the veil, the sisters would

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have thought little blame of her even for remembering that once she dreamt of another bridegroom than the heavenly Spouse. The nun had promised to send early in the morning to Lord Cheney, who, no doubt, knew the abode of his friend ; and Mary, as she finished telling all this in her low and weak speech, lay still and quiet, looking upon her friend almost with as calm and peaceful a glance of her absorbing eyes as when she had looked at him in the garden parlour at Gidding years ago. He himself said little ; it was not his words she wanted, could he have spoken them. That he was there by her, looking up in her face, holding her hand, was quite enough. At last she said,—

‘And that mission to the Papist murderers, Johnny, you did not wish to bring them into England of your own accord, or only as a plot of the Jesuits ? Surely you were but the servant of one whom you could not discover.’

‘I had the King’s own commission for all I did, for every word I said,’ said Inglesant eagerly — ‘a commission written by himself, and signed in my presence, which he gave me himself. That was the paper the Lord Biron would not burn.’

‘I knew it must be so, Johnny ; my uncle told me it must be so. It seems to me you have served a hard master, though you do not complain. We heard about the scaffold at Charing Cross. Will you serve your heavenly Master as well as you have served your King ?’

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‘I desire to serve Him, am seeking to serve Him even now, but I do not find the way. Tell me how I can serve Him, Mary, and I swear to you I will do whatever you shall say.’

‘He must teach you, Johnny, not I. I doubt not that you follow Him now, will serve Him hereafter much better than I could ever show you—could ever do myself. Whatever men may think of the path you have already chosen, no one can say you have not walked in it steadily to the end. Only walk in this way as steadily, Johnny,—only follow your heart as unflinchingly, when it points you to Him. I will do nothing night and day while I live, Johnny, but pray to Jesus that He may lead you to Himself.’

The old familiar glamour that shed such a holy radiance on the woods and fields of Gidding, now, to Inglesant’s senses, filled the little convent room. The light of heaven that entered the open window with the perfume of the hawthorn was lost in the diviner radiance that shone from this girl’s face into the depths of his being, and bathed the place where she was in light. His heart ceased to beat, and he lay, as in a trance, to behold the glory of God.

CHAPTER XIX

INGLESANT was present at the funeral in the cemetery of the convent, and caused a white marble cross to be set over the grave. He remained in his lodgings several days, melancholy and alone. His whole nature was shaken to the foundation, and life was made more holy and solemn to him than ever before. The burden of worldly matters became intolerable, and the coil that had been about his life so long grew more oppressive till it seemed to stifle his soul. He desired to listen to the Divine Voice, but the voice seemed silent, or to speak only the language of worldly plans and schemes. He desired to live a life of holiness, but the only life that seemed possible to him was one of business and intrigue. What was this life of holiness that men ought to lead? Could it be followed in the world? Or must he retire to some monastic solitude to cultivate it; and was it certain that it would flourish even there? It seemed more and more impossible for him to find it; he was repulsed

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and turned back upon his worldly life at every attempt he made. He almost resolved to give up the Jesuit, and to seek some more spiritual guide. He remembered Cressy, who had become a Romanist, and a Benedictine monk of the Monastery at Douay, and was at that moment in Paris.

When Inglesant had been last in Oxford, the secession of Hugh Paulin Cressy, as he had been named at the font in Wakefield Church,—Serenus de Cressy, as he called himself in religion,—had created a painful and disturbed impression. A Fellow of Merton, the chaplain and friend of Lord Strafford, and afterwards of Lord Falkland, a quick and accurate disputant, a fine and persuasive preacher, a man of sweet and attractive nature, and of natural and acquired refinement,—he was one of the leaders of the highest thought and culture of the University. When it was known, therefore, that this man, so admired and beloved, had seceded to Popery, the interest and excitement were very great, and one of Archbishop Usher's friends writes to him in pathetic words of the loss of this bright ornament of the Church, and of the danger to others which his example might cause.

He was at present in Paris, where the conjuncture of religious affairs was very exciting. There was much in the discussions which were going on singularly fitted to Inglesant's state

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of mind, and in some degree conducive to it. The Jesuits, both in Rome and Paris, were occupied as they had been for several years, in that great controversy with the followers of Jansenius, which, a few years afterwards, culminated in those discussions and that condemnation in the Sorbonne so graphically described by Pascal. We have only to do with it as it affected Inglesant, and it is therefore not necessary to inquire what were the real reasons which caused the Jesuits to oppose the Jansenists. The point at which the controversy had arrived, when Inglesant was in Paris, was one which touched closely upon the topics most interesting to his heart. This was the doctrine of sufficient grace. The Jesuits, on this as in all other matters, had taken that side which is undoubtedly most pleasing to the frailty of the human heart,—an invariable policy, to which they owed their supremacy over the popular mind.

When the faithful came to the theologians to inquire what was the true state of human nature since its corruption, they received St. Augustine's answer, confirmed by St. Bernard and St. Thomas Aquinas, and finally adopted by the Jansenists,—‘That human nature has no more sufficient grace than God is pleased to bestow upon it, and that fresh efficacious grace must constantly be given by God, which grace God does not give to all, and without which

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no man can be saved.' In opposition to this, the Jesuits, about the time of the Reformation, came forward with what was called a new doctrine,—that sufficient grace is given to all men, as men, but so far compliant with free-will that this latter makes the former efficacious or inefficacious at its choice, without any new supply from God. The Jansenists retorted that this doctrine rendered unnecessary the efficacious grace of Jesus Christ; but that this does not follow is plain, for this efficacious grace of God that is given to all men once for all, may be owing to the sacrifice of Christ. To many natures this universal gracious beneficent doctrine of all-pervading grace, which includes all mankind, was much more pleasing than the doctrine of the necessity of special grace, involving spiritual assumption in those who possess it, or say they do, and bitter uncertainty and depression in humble, self-doubting, and thoughtful minds. It resembled also the doctrines of the Laudian School, in which Inglesant had been brought up. So attractive indeed was it, that the Benedictines were compelled to profess it, and to pretend to side with the Jesuits, while in reality hating their doctrine.

When Inglesant remembered Cressy, and remembered also that he belonged to the Benedictines, the polished and learned cultivators of the useful arts, and was told that Cressy had chosen this order that he might have leisure

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and books to prosecute his studies and his writings, he conceived great hope that from him he should learn the happy mean he was in search of, between the worldliness of the Jesuits on the one hand, and the narrow repulsiveness of the Mendicant orders and the Calvinists on the other. In this frame of mind he sought an interview with Cressy. The directions of the Jesuits and of the Laudian School seemed to Inglesant to have failed ; to have associated himself with the Jansenists or Calvinists would have been distasteful to him, and almost impossible. He sought in the Benedictine monk that compromise which the heart of man is perpetually seeking between the things of this world and the things of God. But though for the time the influence of the training of his life was somewhat shaken, it was far from removed, and an event occurred which, even before he saw Cressy, reforged the chains upon him to some extent. One Sunday evening, the day before he was to meet Cressy, walking along the Rue St. Martin from the Boulevard where he had lodgings, he turned into the Jesuits' Church just as the sermon had begun. The dim light found its way into the vast Church from the stained windows ; a lamp burning before some shrine shone partially on the preacher, as he stood in the stone pulpit by a great pillar, in his white surplice and rich embroidered stole. He was a young man, thin

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and sad-looking, and spoke slowly, and with long pauses and intervals, but with an intense eagerness and pathos that went to every heart. The first words that Inglesant heard, as he reached the nearest unoccupied place, were these :—

‘Ah ! if you adored a God crowned with roses and with pearls, it were a matter nothing strange ; but to prostrate yourselves daily before a crucifix, charged with nails and thorns,—you living in such excess and superfluity in the flesh, dissolved in softness,—how can that be but cruel ? Ah, think of that crucifix as you lie warm in silken curtains, perfumed with eau de naffe, as you sit at dainty feasts, as you ride forth in the sunshine in gallantry. He is cold and naked ; He is alone ; behind Him the sky is dreary and streaked with darkening clouds, for the night cometh—the night of God. His locks are wet with the driving rain ; His hair is frozen with the sleet ; His beauty is departed from Him ; all men have left Him—all men, and God also, and the holy angels hide their faces. He is crowned with thorns, but you with garlands ; He wears nothing in His hands but piercing nails ; you have rubies and diamonds on yours. Ah ! will you tell me you can still be faithful though in brave array ? I give that answer which Tertullian gave,—“I fear this neck snared with wreaths and ropes of pearls and emeralds. I fear the sword of

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persecution can find no entrance there." No ! hear you not the voice of the crucifix ? Follow Me. We are engaged to suffer by His sufferings as we look on Him. Suffering is our vow and profession. Love which cannot suffer is unworthy of the name of love.'

* * * * *

The next day, at the appointed hour, he went to the Benedictine Monastery, in the Rue de Varrennes, and sent in his name to Father de Cressy. He was shown, not into the visitors' room, but into a private parlour, where Cressy came to him immediately. Dressed in the habit of his order, with a lofty and refined expression, he was a striking and attractive man ; differing from the Jesuit in that, though both were equally persuasive, the latter united more power of controlling others than the appearance of Cressy implied. He had known Inglesant slightly at Oxford, and greeted him with great cordiality.

'I am not surprised that you are come to me, Mr. Inglesant,' he said, with a most winning gesture and smile ; 'De Guevara, who was himself both a courtier and a recluse, says that the penance of religious men was sweeter than the pleasures of courtiers. Has your experience brought you to the same conclusion ?'

Inglesant thanked him for granting him an interview : and sitting down, he told him shortly the story of his life, and his early

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partiality for the mystical theology ; of his wishes and attempts ; of his desire to follow the Divine Master ; and of his failures and discouragements, his studies, his Pagan sympathies ; and how life and reality of every kind, and inquiry, and the truth of history, and philosophy, even while it sided with or supported religion, still seemed to hinder and oppose the heavenly walk.

‘I do not know, Mr. Inglesant,’ said De Cressy, ‘whether your case is easier or more difficult than that of those who usually come to me ; I have many come to me ; and they usually, one and all, come with the exact words of the blessed gospel on their lips, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” And I look them in the face often, and wonder, and often find no words to speak. See Jesus, I often think, I do not doubt it ! who would not wish to see Him who is the fulness of all perfection that the heart and intellect ever conceived, in whom all creation has its centre, all the troubles and sorrows of life have their cure, all the longings of carnal men their fruition ? But why come to me ? Is He not walking to and fro on the earth continually, in every act of charity and self-sacrifice that is done among men ? Is He not offered daily on every altar, preached continually from every pulpit ? Why come to me ? Old men of sixty and seventy come to me with these very words, “Sir, we would see Jesus.” If the course of sixty

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years, if the troubles and confusions of a long life, if He Himself has not revealed this Beatific Vision to them,—how can I? But with you it is very different. By your own story I know that you have seen Jesus; that you know Him as you know your dearest friend. This makes our discourse at first much the easier, for I need waste no words upon a matter to enlarge upon which to you would be an insult to your heart. But it makes it more difficult afterwards, when we come to ask how it is that, with this transcendental knowledge, you are still dissatisfied, and find life so difficult a path to tread. I make no apology for speaking plainly; such would be as much an insult to you as the other. You remind me of the rich oratories I have seen of some of our Court ladies, where everything is beautiful and costly, but where a classic statue of Apollo stands by the side of a crucifix, a Venus with our Lady, a Cupid near St. Michael, and a pair of beads hanging on Mercury's Caduceus.

'You are like the young man who came to Jesus, and whom Jesus loved, for you have great possessions. You have been taught all that men desire to know, and are accomplished in all that makes life delightful. You have the knowledge of the past, and know the reality of men's power, and wisdom, and beauty, which they possess of themselves, and did possess in the old classic times. You have culled of the tree of knowledge, and know good and evil: yea, the good

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that belongs to this world, and is part of it, and the strength and wisdom and beauty of the children of this world ; yea, and the evil and ignorance and folly of the children of light. Let us grant—I am willing to grant—that Plato has a purer spiritual instinct than St. Paul. I will grant that Lucretius has the wisdom of this world with him ; ay, and its alluring tongue. Paul did not desire spiritual insight ; he wanted Jesus. You stand as a god free to choose. On the one hand, you have the delights of reason and of intellect, the beauty of that wonderful creation which God made, yet did not keep ; the charms of Divine philosophy, and the enticements of the poet's art ; on the other side, Jesus. You know Him, and have seen Him. I need say no more of His perfections.

‘I do not speak to you, as I might speak to others, of penalties and sufferings hereafter, in which, probably, you do not believe. Nor do I speak to you, as I might to others, of evidences that our faith is true, of proofs that hereafter we shall walk with Christ and the saints in glory. I am willing to grant you that it may be that we are mistaken ; that in the life to come we may find we have been deceived ; nay, that Jesus Himself is in a different station and position to what we preach. This is nothing to your purpose. To those who know Him as you know Him, and have seen Him as you have, better Jesus, beaten and defeated, than all the

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universe besides, triumphing and crowned. I offer to you nothing but the alternative which every man sooner or later must place before himself. Shall he turn a deaf ear to the voice of reason, and lay himself open only to the light of faith? or shall he let human wisdom and human philosophy break up this light, as through a glass, and please himself with the varied colours upon the path of life? Every man must choose; and having chosen, it is futile to lament and regret; he must abide by his choice, and by the different fruit it brings. You wish this life's wisdom, and to walk with Christ as well; and you are your own witness that it cannot be. The two cannot walk together, as you have found. To you, especially, this is the great test and trial that Christ expects of you to the very full. We of this religious order have given ourselves to learning, as you know; nay, in former years, to that Pagan learning, which is so attractive to you, though of late years we devote ourselves to producing editions of the Fathers of the Church. But even this you must keep yourself from. To most men this study is no temptation: to you it is fatal. I put before you your life, with no false colouring, no tampering with the truth. Come with me to Douay; you shall enter our house according to the strictest rule; you shall engage in no study that is any delight or effort to the intellect; but you shall teach the smallest children in the

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schools, and visit the poorest people, and perform the duties of the household—and all for Christ. I promise you on the faith of a gentleman and a priest—I promise you, for I have no shade of doubt—that in this path you shall find the satisfaction of the heavenly walk ; you shall walk with Jesus day by day, growing ever more and more like to Him ; and your path, without the least fall or deviation, shall lead more and more into the light, until you come unto the perfect day ; and on your death-bed—the death-bed of a saint—the vision of the smile of God shall sustain you, and Jesus Himself shall meet you at the gates of eternal life.’

Every word that Cressy spoke went straight to Inglesant’s conviction, and no single word jarred upon his taste. He implicitly believed that what the Benedictine offered him he should find. There was no doubt—could be no doubt—that it was by such choice as this that such men as Cressy gained for themselves a power in the heavenly warfare, and not only attained to the heavenly walk themselves, but moved the earth to its foundations, and drew thousands into the ranks of Christ. He saw the choice before him fairly, as Cressy had said, and indeed, it was not for the first time. Then his mind went back to his old master, and to that school where no such thing as this was required of him, and yet the heavenly light offered to him as freely as by this man. The sermon of the

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night before came into his mind again ; surely where such doctrine as that was preached, might he not find rest ? It was true that his coming there, and his confession, closed his lips before Cressy ; but might he not have been too hasty ? Life was not yet over with him ; perchance he might yet find what he sought in some other way. He saw the path of perfect self-denial open before him,—renunciation, not of pleasure, nor even of the world, but of himself, of his intellect, of his very life,—and distinctly of his free choice he refused it. This only may be said for him : he was convinced that every word the Benedictine had said to him was true,—that in the life he offered him he should follow and find the Lord ; but he was not equally convinced that it was the will of Christ that he should accept this life, and should follow and find Him in this way, and in no other. Had he been as clear of this as of the truth of Cressy's words, then indeed would his turning away have been a clear denial of Jesus Christ ; but it was the voice of Cressy that spoke to him, and not the voice of Christ ; it came to him with a conviction and a power all but irresistible, but it failed to carry with it the absolute conviction of the heavenly call. How could it ? The heavenly call itself must speak very loud before it silences and convinces the unwilling heart.

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He rose from his seat before the monk, and looking sadly down upon him he said,—

‘I believe all that you say and all that you promise, and that the heavenly walk lies before me in the road that you have pointed out ; but I cannot follow it—it is too strait. I return your kindness and your plainness with words equally plain ; and while you think of me as lost and unworthy, it may be some well-earned satisfaction to you to remember that none ever spoke truer, or nobler, or kinder words to any man than you have spoken to me.’

‘I do not look on you as lost, Mr. Inglesant, —far from it,’ said Cressy, rising as he spoke ; ‘I expect you will yet witness a good confession for Christ in the world and in the Court ; but I believe you have had to-day a more excellent way shown you, which, but for the trammels of your birth and training, you might have had grace to walk in, for your own exceeding blessedness and the greater glory of the Lord Christ. I wish you every benediction of this life and of the next ; and I shall remember you at the altar as a young man who came to Jesus, and whom Jesus loves.’

Inglesant took his leave of him, and left the monastery. He came away very sorrowful from Serenus de Cressy. Whether he also, at the same time, was turning away from Jesus Christ, who can tell ?

The next day the Jesuit arrived in Paris.

CHAPTER XX

INGLESANT was much struck with the change in the Jesuit's appearance. He was worn and thin, and looked discouraged and depressed. He was evidently extremely pleased to see his pupil again, and his manner was affectionate and even respectful. He appeared shaken and nervous, and Inglesant fancied that he was rather shy of meeting him; but if so, it soon passed off under the influence of the cordial greeting with which he was received.

To Inglesant's inquiry as to where he had been, the Jesuit answered that it did not matter; he had succeeded very imperfectly in his mission, whatever it had been. He asked Inglesant whether he had met with Sir Kenelm Digby, or heard anything of him. In reply to which Inglesant told him the reports which he had heard concerning him.

'He is mad,' said the Jesuit, 'and he is not the less dangerous. He was sent to Rome by the Queen, where he made great mischief, and offended the Pope by his insolence. He has

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sided with the Parliament in England, and is engaged on a scheme to persuade Cromwell to recall the King, and seat him on the throne as an elective monarch. The Queen does not wish to break with him altogether, both because he has great influence with some powerful Catholics, and because, if nothing better can be done, she would perforce accept the elective monarchy for her son. But the scheme is chimerical, and will come to nothing. Cromwell intends the crown for himself. You see, Jack,' continued St. Clare with a smile, 'all our plans have failed. The English Church is destroyed, and those Catholics who always opposed it are thought much of at Rome now, and carry all before them. I have not altered my opinion, however, and I shall die in the same. But we must wait. I do not wish to influence you any more, nor to involve you any longer in any schemes of mine, but the Queen wants you to go as an agent to Rome in her behalf; and it would be of great service to me, and to any plans which I may in future have, if I had such a friend and correspondent as yourself in that city. If you have no other plans, I do not see that you could do much better than go. You shall have such introductions to my friends there—cardinals and great men—that you may live during your stay in the best company and luxury, and without expense. One of my friends is the Cardinal

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Rinuccini, brother of the Legate the Bishop of Fermo, whom you met in Ireland, and who, by the by, was much impressed with you. You cannot fail to make friends with many who will have it in their power to be of great use to you; and you may establish yourself in some lucrative post, either as a layman, or, if you choose to take orders, as a priest. You will believe me, also, when I say,—what I say to very few,—that I am under obligations to you which I can never repay, and nothing will give me greater pleasure than to see you rich and prosperous, and admired and powerful in the Roman Court. You have the qualities and the experience to command success. You will be backed by the whole power of my friends, with whom to make your fortune will be the work of an after-dinner's talk. You will see Italy, and delight yourself in the sight of all those places and antiquities of which we have so often talked; and with your cultivated and religious tastes you will enter, with the most perfect advantage, into that magic world of sight and sound which the churches and sacred services in Rome present to the devout. I cannot see that you can do better than go.'

Inglesant sat looking at the Jesuit with a singular expression in his eyes, which the latter did not understand. Yes, surely it was a very different offer from that of Serenus de Cressy, yet Inglesant did not delay to answer from any

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indecision ; from the moment the Jesuit began to speak he knew that he should go. But he took a kind of melancholy pleasure in contrasting the two paths, the two men, the different choice they offered him, and in reading a half sad, half sarcastic commentary on himself.

After a minute or two, he said,—

‘I thank you much for your good-will and quite undeserved patronage. It is by far too good an offer to be refused, and I gladly accept it. You know, doubtless, what has happened to me, especially within these last few days, and that I have no friend left on earth save yourself ; such a journey as that which you propose to me will, at the least, distract my thoughts from such a melancholy fate as mine.’

‘I knew of your brother’s murder,’ said the Jesuit ; ‘I have heard of the man before—one of those utterly lost and villainous natures which no country but Italy ever produced. Do you wish to seek him ?’

Inglesant told him that one of his principal objects in staying in Paris was to seek his assistance for that purpose ; and that he felt it a sacred duty, which he owed to his brother, that his murderer should not escape unpunished.

‘I have no doubt I can learn where he is,’ said the other ; ‘but I do not well see what you can do when you have found him, unless it happens to be in a place where you have powerful friends. It is true that he is so generally known

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and hated in Italy, that you might easily get help in punishing him should you meet him there : but he is hardly likely to return to his native country, except for some powerful reason.'

'If I can do nothing else,' said Inglesant bitterly, 'I can tell him who I am and shoot him dead, or run him through the body. He murdered my brother, just as he had come back to me—to me in prison and alone, and was a loving friend and brother to me, and would have been through life. Do you suppose that I should spare him, or that any moment will be so delightful to me as the one in which I see him bleed to death at my feet, as I saw my poor brother, struck by his hand, as he shall be by mine?'

The Jesuit looked at Inglesant with surprise. The terrible earnestness of his manner, and the unrelenting and grim pleasure he seemed to take at the prospect of revenge, seemed so inconsistent with the refined and religious tone of his ordinary character, approaching almost to weakness ; but the next moment he thought, 'Why should I wonder at it ! The man who has gone through what he did without flinching must have a strength of purpose about him far other than some might think.'

He said aloud,—

'Well, I doubt not I can find him ; he is well known in France, in Spain, and in Italy, and if he goes to Germany he can be traced.

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But what was the other sad misfortune you spoke of?—something within the last few days, you said.'

Inglesant had been looking fixedly before him since he had last spoken, with a steady blank expression, which, since his imprisonment, his face sometimes wore,—part of a certain wildness in his look which bespoke a mind ill at ease and a confused brain. He was following up his prey to the death.

He started at the Jesuit's question, and seemed to recollect with an effort ; then he said,—

'Mary Collet died at the convent of the Nuns of the —— last week. I only found her out the night before ;' and as he spoke, the contrast arose in his mind of the death-bed of the saint-like girl, and the Italian's bleeding body struck down by his revenge. The footsteps of the Saviour he had promised his friend to follow, surely could not lead him to such a scene as that. If this were the first-fruits of his refusal to follow Serenus de Cressy, surely he must also have turned his back on Christ Himself.

He covered his face with his hands, and the Jesuit saw that he wept. He supposed it was simply from grief at the death of his friend, and he was surprised at the strength of his attachment. Like others, he had thought Inglesant's love a rather cool and Platonic passion.

'I always thought him one of those nice and coy lovers,' he said to himself, 'who always

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observe some defect in the thing they love, which weakens their passion, and shows them that the reality is so much inferior to their idea, that they easily desist from their enterprise, and vanish as if they had not so much intention to love as to vanish, and had more shame to have begun their courtship than purpose to continue it. He must be much shaken by his suffering and by his brother's death.'

He waited a few moments, and then spoke to Inglesant about his health, of his brother's death, and of his imprisonment. He spoke to him of the late King, and of his distress at the necessity under which he lay of denying Inglesant's commission : and he said many other things calculated to cheer his friend and please his self-regard.

Inglesant listened to him not without pleasure, but he said little. An idea had taken possession of his mind, which he carried with him into Italy and for long afterwards. He was more than half convinced that, in rejecting Cressy's advice, he had turned his back on Christ ; and he was the more confirmed in this belief because never had the image of the Italian, nor the desire of revenge, taken so strong a hold upon his imagination as now. It occurred to his excited imagination that Christ had deserted him, and the Fiend taken possession, and that the course and intention of the latter would be to lure him on, by such images, to some terrible and lonely place, where the Italian and he together should

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be involved in one common ghastly deed of crime, one common and eternal ruin. The sense of having had a great act of self-denial placed before him and having refused it, no doubt weighed down and blunted his conscience; and once placed, as he half thought, upon the downward path, nothing seemed before him but the gradual descent, adorned at first by some poor show of gaudy flowers, but ending speedily—for there was no self-delusion to such a nature as his, which had tasted of the heavenly food—in miserable and filthy mire, where, loathing himself and despised by others, nothing awaited him but eternal death. He answered the Jesuit almost mechanically, and on parting from him at night promised indifferently to accompany him on the morrow to an audience with the Queen.

CHAPTER XXI

INGLESANT travelled to Marseilles, and by packet boat to Genoa. The beauty of the approach by sea to this city, and the lovely gardens and the country around, gave him the greatest delight. The magnificent streets of palaces, mostly of marble, and the thronged public places, the galleries of paintings, and the museums, filled his mind with astonishment ; and the entrance into Italy, wonderful as he had expected it to be, surpassed his anticipation. He stayed some time in Genoa, to one or more of the Jesuit fathers in which city he had letters. Under the guidance of these cultivated men he commenced an education in art, such as in these days can be scarcely understood. From his coming into Italy a new life had dawned upon him in the music of that country. Fascinated as he had always been with the Church music at London and Oxford, for several years he had been cut off from all such enjoyment, and, at its best, it was but the prelude to what he heard now. For

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whole hours he would remain on his knees at mass, lost and wandering in that strange world of infinite variety, the mass music—so various in its phases, yet with a monotone of pathos through it all. The musical parties were also a great pleasure. He played the violin a little in England, and rapidly improved by the excellent tuition he met with here. He became, however, a proficient in what the Italians called the *viola d'amore*, a treble viol, strung with wire, which attracted him by its soft and sweet tone. Amid a concord of sweet sounds, within hearing of the splash of fountains, and surrounded by the rich colours of an Italian interior, the young Englishman found himself in a new world of delight. As the very soul of music, at one moment merry and the next mad with passion and delightful pain, uttered itself in the long-continued tremor of the violins, it took possession in all its power of Inglesant's spirit. The whole of life is recited upon the plaintive strings, and by their mysterious effect upon the brain fibres, men are brought into sympathy with life in all its forms, from the gay promise of its morning sunrise to the silence of its gloomy night.

From Genoa he went to Sienna, where he stayed some time—the dialect here being held to be very pure, and fit for foreigners to accustom themselves to. He spoke Italian before with sufficient ease, and associating with

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several of the religious in this city he soon acquired the language perfectly. There can be nothing more delightful than the first few days of life in Italy in the company of polished and congenial men. Inglesant enjoyed life at Sienna very much ; the beautiful clean town, all marble and polished brick, the shining walls and pavement softened and shaded by gardens and creeping vines, the piazza and fountains, the cool retired walks with distant prospects, the Duomo, within and without of polished marble inexpressibly beautiful, with its exceeding sweet music and well-tuned organs, the libraries full of objects of the greatest interest, the statues and antiquities everywhere interspersed.

The summer and winter passed over, and he was still in Sienna, and seemed loath to leave. He associated mostly with the ecclesiastics to whom he had brought letters of introduction, for he was more anxious at first to become acquainted with the country and its treasures of art and literature than to make many acquaintances. He kept himself so close and studious that he met with no adventures such as most travellers, especially those who abandon themselves to the dissolute courses of the country, meet with,—courses which were said at that time to be able to make a devil out of a saint. He saw nothing of the religious system but what was excellent and delightful, seeing everything through the medium of his friends. He

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read all the Italian literature that was considered necessary for a gentleman to be acquainted with ; and though the learning of the Fathers was not what it had been a century ago, he still found several to whom he could talk of his favourite Lucretius and of the divine lessons of Plato.

When he had spent some time in this way in Italy, and considered himself fitted to associate with the inhabitants generally, the Benedictines took Inglesant to visit the family of Cardinal Chigi, who was afterwards Pope, and who was a native of Sienna. The Cardinal himself was in Rome, but his brother, Don Mario, received Inglesant politely, and introduced him to his son, Don Flavio, and to two of his nephews. With one of these, Don Agostino Chigi, Inglesant became very intimate, and spent much of his time at his house. In this family he learnt much of the state of parties in Rome, and was advised in what way to comport himself when he should come there. The Cardinal Panzirollo, who with the Cardinal-Patron (Pamphilio) had lately been in great esteem, had just died, having weakened his health by his continued application to business, and the Pope had appointed Cardinal Chigi his successor as first Secretary of State. The Pope's sister-in-law, Donna Olympia Maldachini, was supposed to be banished, but many thought this was only a political retreat, and that she still directed the affairs of the

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Papacy. At any rate she soon returned to Rome and to power. This extraordinary woman, whose loves and intrigues were enacted on the stage in Protestant countries, was the sister-in-law of the Pope, and was said to live with him in criminal correspondence, and to have charmed him by some secret incantation—the incantation of a strong woman over a weak and criminal man. For a long time she had abused her authority in the most scandalous manner, and exerted her unbounded ascendancy over the Pope to gratify her avarice and ambition, which were as unbounded as her power. She disposed of all benefices, which she kept vacant till she was fully informed of their value; she exacted a third of the entire value of all offices, receiving twelve years' value for an office for life. She gave audience upon public affairs, enacted new laws, abrogated those of former Popes, and sat in council with the Pope with bundles of memorials in her hands. Severe satires were daily pasted on the statue of Pasquin at Rome; yet it seemed so incredible that Cardinal Panziorollo, backed though he was by the Cardinal-Nephew, should be able to overthrow the power of this woman by a representation he was said to have made to the Pope, that when Innocent at length with great reluctance banished Olympia, most persons supposed it was only a temporary piece of policy.

The Chigi were at this time living in Sienna,

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in great simplicity, at their house in the Strada Romana, and in one or two small villas in the neighbourhood ; but they were of an ancient and noble family of this place, and were held in great esteem, and were all of them men of refinement and carefully educated. They had made considerable figure in Rome during the Pontificate of Julius II. ; but afterwards meeting with misfortunes, were obliged to return to Sienna, where they had continued to reside ever since. At this time there was no idea that the Cardinal of this house would be the next Pope, and though well acquainted with the politics of Rome, the family occupied themselves mostly with other and more innocent amusements—in the arrangement of their gardens and estates, in the duties of hospitality, and in artistic, literary, and antiquarian pursuits. The University and College of Sienna had produced many excellent scholars and several Popes, and the city itself was full of remains of antique art, and was adorned with many modern works of great beauty—the productions of that school which takes its name from the town. Among such scenes as these, and with such companions, Inglesant's time passed so pleasantly that he was in no hurry to go on to Rome.

The country about the city was celebrated for hunting, and the wild boar and the stag afforded excellent and exciting, if sometimes dangerous sport. Amid the beautiful valleys,

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rich with vineyards, and overlooked by rocky hills and castled summits, were scenes fitted both for pleasure and sport ; and the hunting gave place, often and in a moment, to *al fresco* banquets, and conversations and pleasant dalliance with the ladies, by the cool shade near some fountain, or under some over-arching rock. Under the influence of these occupations, so various and so attractive both to the mind and body, and thanks to so many novel objects and continual change of scene, Inglesant's health rapidly improved, and his mind recovered much of the calm and cheerfulness which were natural to it. He thought little of the Italian, and the terrible thoughts with which he had connected him were for the time almost forgotten, though, from time to time, when any accident recalled the circumstances to his recollection, they returned upon his spirits with a melancholy effect.

The first time that these gloomy thoughts overpowered him since his arrival at Sienna was on the following occasion. He had been hunting with a party of friends in the valley of Montalcino one day in early autumn. The weather previously had been wet, and the rising sun had drawn upward masses of white vapour, which wreathed the green foliage and the vine slopes, where the vintage was going on, and concealed from sight the hills on every side. A pale golden light pervaded every place, and gave

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mystery and beauty to the meanest cottages and farm-sheds. The party, having missed the stag, stopped at a small osteria at the foot of a sloping hill, and Inglesant and another gentleman wandered up into the vineyard that sloped upwards behind the house. As they went up, the vines became gradually visible out of the silvery mist, and figures of peasant men and women moved about—vague and half-hidden until they were close to them, pigeons and doves flew in and out. Inglesant's friend stopped to speak to some of the peasant girls, but Inglesant himself, tempted by the pleasing mystery that the mountain slope—apparently full of hidden and beautiful life—presented, wandered on, gradually climbing higher and higher, till he had left the vintage far below him, and heard no sound but that of the grasshoppers among the grass and the olive trees, and the distant laugh of the villagers, or now and then the music of a hunting horn which one of the party below was blowing for his own amusement. The mist was now so thick that he could see nothing, and it was by chance that he even kept the ascending path. The hill was rocky here and there, but for the most part was covered with short grass, cropped by the goats which Inglesant startled as he came unexpectedly upon them in the mist. Suddenly, after some quarter of an hour's climbing, he came out of the mist in a moment, and stood under a perfectly clear

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sky upon the summit of the hill. The blue vault stretched above him without a cloud, all alight with the morning sun ; at his feet the grassy hill-top sparkling in dew, not yet dried up, and vocal with grasshoppers, not yet silenced by the heat. The hill-top rose like an island out of a sea of vapour, seething and rolling round in misty waves, and lighted with prismatic colours of every hue. Out of this sea, here and there, other hill-tops, on which goats were browsing, lay beneath the serene heaven ; and rocky points and summits, far higher than these, reflected back the sun. He would have seemed to stand above all human conversation and walks of men if every now and then some break in the mist had not taken place, opening glimpses of landscapes and villages far below ; and also the sound of bells, and the music of the horn, came up fitfully through the mist. Why, he did not know, but as he gazed on this, the most wonderful and beautiful sight he had ever seen, the recollection of Serenus de Cressy returned upon his mind with intense vividness ; and the contrast between the life he was leading in Italy, amid every delight of mind and sense, and the life the Benedictine had offered him in vain, smote upon his conscience with terrible force. Upon the lonely mountain top, beneath the serene silence, he threw himself upon the turf, and, overwhelmed with a sudden passion, repented that he had been born. Amid the extraordinary

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loveliness, the most gloomy thoughts took possession of him, and the fiend seemed to stand upon the smiling mount and claim him for himself. So palpably did the consciousness of his choice, worldly as he thought it, cause the presence of evil to appear, that in that heavenly solitude he looked round for the murderer of his brother. The moment appeared to him, for the instant, to be the one appointed for the consummation of his guilt. The horn below sounding the recall drew his mind out of this terrible reverie, and he came down the hill, from which the mist was gradually clearing, as in a dream. He rejoined his company, who remarked the wild expression of his face.

His old disease, in fact, never entirely left him ; he walked often as in a dream, and when the fit was upon him could never discern the real and the unreal. He knew that terrible feeling when the world and all its objects are slipping away, when the brain reels, and seems only to be kept fixed and steady by a violent exertion of the will ; and the mind is confused and perplexed with thoughts which it cannot grasp, and is full of fancies of vague duties and acts which it cannot perform, though it is convinced that they are all important to be done.

The Chigi family knew of Inglesant's past life, and of his acquaintance with the Archbishop of Fermo, the Pope's Nuncio, and they advised

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him to make the acquaintance of his brother, the Cardinal Rinuccini, before going to Rome.

‘If you go to Rome in his train, or have him for a patron on your arrival, you will start in a much better position than if you enter the city an entire stranger,—and the present is not a very favourable time for going to Rome. The Pope is not expected to live very long. Donna Olympia and the Pamphili, or pretended Pamphili (for the Cardinal-Nephew is not a Pamphili at all), are securing what they can, using every moment to enrich themselves while they have the power. The moment the Pope dies they fall, and with them all who have been connected with them. It is therefore useless to go to Rome at present, except as a private person to see the city, and this you can do better in the suite of the Cardinal than in any other way. You may wonder that we do not offer to introduce you to our uncle the Cardinal Chigi; but we had rather that you should come to Rome at first under the patronage of another. You will understand more of our reasons before long; meanwhile, we will write to our uncle respecting you, and you may be sure that he will promote your interests as much as is in his power.’

The Cardinal Rinuccini was at that time believed to be at his own villa, situated in a village some distance from Florence to the north, and Don Agostino offered to accompany Inglesant so far on his journey.

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This ride, though a short one, was very pleasant, and endeared the two men to each other more than ever. They travelled simply, with a very small train, and did not hurry themselves on the route. Indeed, they travelled so leisurely that they were very nearly being too late for their purpose. On their arrival at the last stage before reaching Florence, they stopped for the night at a small osteria, and had no sooner taken up their quarters than a large train arrived at the inn, and on their inquiry they were informed it was the Cardinal Rinuccini himself on his way to Rome. They immediately sent their names to his Eminence, saying they had been coming to pay their respects to him, and offering to resign their apartment, which was the best in the house. The Cardinal, who travelled in great state, with his four-post bed and furniture of all kinds with him, returned a message that he could not disturb them in their room; that he remembered Mr. Inglesant's name in some letters from his brother; and that he should be honoured by their company to supper.

The best that the village could afford was placed on the Cardinal's table, and their host entertained the two young men with great courtesy.

He was descended from a noble family in Florence, which boasted among its members Octavio Rinuccini the poet, who came to Paris

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in the suite of Marie de Medicis, and is said by some to have been the inventor of the Opera. Besides the Pope's Legate another brother of the Cardinal's, Thomas Battista Rinuccini, was Great Chamberlain to the Grand Duke of Tuscany. All the brothers had been carefully educated, and were men of literary tastes; but while the Archbishop had devoted himself mostly to politics, the Cardinal had confined himself almost entirely to literary pursuits. He owed his Cardinal's hat to the Grand Duke, who was extremely partial to him and promoted his interests in every way. He was a man of profound learning, and an enthusiastic admirer of antiquity, but was also an acute logician and theologian, and perfectly well read in Church history, and in the controversy of the century, both in theology and philosophy. Before the end of supper Inglesant found that he was acquainted with the writings of Hobbes, whom he had met in Italy, and of whom he inquired with interest, as soon as he found Inglesant had been acquainted with him.

The following morning the Cardinal expressed his sorrow that the business which took him to Rome was of so important a nature that it obliged him to proceed without delay. He approved of the advice that Inglesant had already received, and recommended him to proceed to Florence, with Don Agostino, as he was so near; so that he might not have his

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journey for nothing, and might see the city under very favourable circumstances. Inglesant was the more ready to agree to this as he wished to see as much of Italy as he could, unshackled by the company of the great, which, in the uncertain state of health both of his body and mind, was inexpressibly burdensome to him. He had already seen in this last journey a great deal of the distress and bad government which prevailed everywhere ; and he wished to make himself acquainted, in some measure, with the causes of this distress before going to Rome. As he rode through the beautiful plains he had been astonished at the few inhabitants, and at the wretchedness of the few. Italy had suffered greatly in her commerce by the introduction of Indian silks into Europe. Some of her most flourishing cities had been depopulated, their nobles ruined ; and long streets of neglected palaces, deserted and left in magnificent decay, presented a melancholy though romantic spectacle. But bad government, and the oppression and waste caused by the accumulated wealth and idleness of the innumerable religious orders, had more to do in ruining the prosperity of the country than any commercial changes ; and proofs of this fact met the traveller's eye on every hand.

It seemed to Inglesant that it was very necessary that he should satisfy himself upon some of these points before becoming involved

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in any political action in the country ; and he shrank from entering Rome at present, and from attaching himself to any great man or any party. In a country where the least false step is fatal, and may plunge a man in irretrievable ruin, or consign him to the dungeons of the Holy Office, it is certainly prudent in a stranger to be wary of his first steps. Having communicated these resolutions to his friend, the two young men, on their arrival at Florence, took lodgings privately in the Piazza del Santo Spirito ; and occupied their time for some days in viewing the city, and visiting the churches and museums, as though they had been simply travellers from curiosity.

Inglesant believed the Italian to be in Rome, which was a farther reason for delaying his journey there. He believed that he was going to engage in some terrible conflict, and he wished to prepare himself by an acquaintance with every form of life in this strange country. The singular scenes that strike a stranger in Italy—the religious processions, the character and habits of the poorer classes, their ideas of moral obligation, their ecclesiastical and legal government—all appeared to him of importance to his future fate.

As he was perfectly unacquainted with the person of his enemy, there was a sort of vague expectation—not to say dread—always present to his mind ; for, though he fancied that it

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would be in Rome that he should find the Italian, yet it was not at all impossible that at any moment—it might be in Florence, or in the open country—he might be the object of a murderous attack. His person was doubtless known to the murderer of his brother, and he thus walked everywhere in the full light, while his enemy was hidden in the dark.

These ideas were seldom absent from his mind, and the image of the murderer was almost constantly before his eyes. Often, as some marked figure crossed his path, he started and watched the retreating form, wondering whether the object of his morbid dread was before him. Often, as the uncovered corpse was borne along the streets, the thought struck him that perhaps his fear and his search were alike needless, and that before him on the bier, harmless and strewn with flowers, lay his terrible foe. These thoughts naturally prevented his engaging unrestrainedly in the pursuits of his age and rank, and he often let Don Agostino go alone into the gay society which was open to them in Florence.

In pursuit of his intention Inglesant took every opportunity, without incurring remark, of associating with the lower orders, and learning their habits, traditions, and tone of thought. He chose streets which led through the poorer parts of the town in passing from one part to another, and in this way, and in the course of

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his visits to different churches and religious houses, he was able to converse with the common people without attracting attention. In excursions into the country, whether on parties of pleasure or for sport, he was also able to throw himself in the same way among the peasantry. Under the pretence of shooting quails he passed several days in more than one country village, and had become acquainted with several of the curés, from whom he gained much information respecting the habits of the people, and of their ideas of crime and of lawful revenge.

One of these curés—a man of penetration and intellect—strongly advised him to see Venice before he went to Rome.

‘Venice,’ he said to him, ‘is the sink of all wickedness, and as such it is desirable that you should see the people there, and mix with them ; besides, as such, it is not at all unlikely that the man you seek may be found there.’

‘What is the cause of this wickedness?’ asked Inglesant.

‘There are several causes,’ replied the priest. ‘One is that the Holy Office there is under the control of the State, and is therefore almost powerless. Wickedness and license of all kinds are therefore unrestrained.’

Inglesant mentioned this advice to Don Agostino, and his desire to proceed to Venice ; but as the other was unwilling to leave Florence

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till the termination of the Carnival, which was now approaching, he was obliged to postpone his intention for some weeks.

On one of the opening days of the Carnival, Inglesant had accompanied Don Agostino to a magnificent supper given by the Grand Duke at his villa and gardens at the Poggio Imperiale some distance outside the Romana gate.

Inglesant had succeeded in throwing off for a time his gloomy thoughts, and had taken his share in the gaiety of the festival ; but the effort and the excitement had produced a reaction, and towards morning he had succeeded in detaching himself from the company, many of whom—the banquet being over—were strolling in the lovely gardens in the cool air which preceded the dawn, and he returned alone to the city. As this was his frequent custom, his absence did not surprise Don Agostino, who scarcely noticed his friend's eccentricities.

When Inglesant reached Florence, the sun had scarcely risen, and in the miraculously clear and solemn light the countless pinnacles and marble fronts of the wonderful city rose with sharp colour and outline into the sky. It lay with the country round it studded with the lines of cypress and encompassed by the massy hills—silent as the grave, and lovely as paradise ; and ever and anon, as it lay in the morning light, a breeze from the mountains passed over it, rustling against the marble façades and through the

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belfries of its towers, like the whisper of a God. Now and again, clear and sharp in the liquid air, the musical bells of the Campanile rang out the time. The cool expanse of the gardens, the country walk, the pure air, and the silent city, seemed to him to chide and reprove the license and gaiety of the night. Excited by the events of the Carnival, his mind and imagination were in that state in which, from the inward fancy, phantoms are projected upon the real stage of life, and, playing their fantastic parts, react upon the excited sense, producing conduct which in turn is real in its result.

As Inglesant entered the city and turned into one of the narrow streets leading up from the Arno, the market people were already entering by the gates, and thronging up with their wares to the Piazze and the markets. Carpenters were already at work on the scaffolds and other preparations for the concluding festivals of the Carnival; but all these people, and all their actions, and even the sounds that they produced, wore that unreal and unsubstantial aspect which the very early morning light casts upon everything.

As Inglesant ascended the narrow street, between the white stone houses which set off the brilliant blue above, several porters and countrywomen, carrying huge baskets and heaps of country produce, ascended with him, or passed him as he loitered along, and other more idle and equivocal persons, who were just awake, looked

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out upon him from doorways and corners as he passed. He had on a gala dress of silk, somewhat disordered by the night and by his walk, and must have appeared a suitable object for the lawless attempts of the ladroni of a great city ; but his appearance was probably not sufficiently helpless to encourage attack.

Half-way up the street, at the corner of a house, stood an image of the Virgin, round which the villagers stopped for a moment, as much to rest as to pay their devotions. As Inglesant stopped also, he noticed an old man of a wretched and abject demeanour, leaning against the wall of the house, as though scarcely able to stand, and looking eagerly at some of the provisions which were carried past him. True to his custom, Inglesant—when he had given him some small coin as an alms—began to speak to him.

‘ You have carried many such loads as these, father, I doubt not, in your time, though it must be a light one now.’

‘ I am past carrying even myself,’ said the other, in a weak and whining voice ; ‘ but I have not carried loads all my life. I have kept a shop on the Goldsmith’s Bridge, and have lived at my ease. Now I have nothing left me but the sun—the sun and the cool shade.’

‘ Yours is a hard fate.’

‘ It is a hard and miserable world, and yet I love it. It has done me nothing but evil, and yet I watch it and seek out what it does, and

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listen to what goes on, just as if I thought to hear of any good fortune likely to come to me. Foolish old man that I am ! What is it to me what people say or do, or who dies, or who is married ? and why should I come out here to see the market people pass, and climb this street to hear of the murder that was done here last night, and look at the body that lies in the room above ?'

'What murder ?' said Inglesant. 'Who was murdered, and by whom ?'

'He is a foreigner ; they say an Inglese—a traveller here merely. Who murdered him I know not, though they do say that too.'

'Where is the body ?' said Inglesant. 'Let us go up.' And he gave the old man another small coin.

The old man looked at him for a moment with a peculiar expression.

'Better not, Signore,' he said, 'better go home.'

'Do not fear for me,' said Inglesant ; 'I bear a charmed life ; no steel can touch me, nor any bullet hurt me, till my hour comes ; and my hour is not yet.'

The old man led the way to an open door, carved with tracery and foliated work, and they ascended a flight of stairs. It was one of those houses, so common in Italian towns, whose plain and massive exterior, pierced with few and narrow windows, gives no idea of the size and

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splendour of the rooms within. When they reached the top of the stairs, Inglesant saw that the house had once, and probably not long before, been the residence of some person of wealth. They passed through several rooms with carved chimney-pieces and cornices, and here and there even some massive piece of furniture still remained. From the windows that opened on the inner side Inglesant could see the tall cypresses of a garden, and hear the splash of fountains. But the house had fallen from its high estate, and was now evidently used for the vilest purposes. After passing two or three rooms, they reached an upper hall or dining-room of considerable length, and painted in fresco apparently of some merit. A row of windows on the left opened on the garden, from which the sound of voices and laughter came up.

The room was bare of furniture, except towards the upper end, where was a small and shattered table, upon which the body of the murdered man was laid. Inglesant went up and stood by its side.

There was no doubt whose countryman he had been. The fair English boy, scarcely bordering upon manhood—the heir, probably, of bright hopes—travelling with a careless or incompetent tutor, lay upon the small table, his long hair glistening in the sunlight, his face peaceful and smiling as in sleep. The fatal rapier thrust, marked by the stain upon the

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clothes, was the sole sign that his mother—waking up probably at that moment in distant England, with his image in her heart—was bereaved for ever of her boy. Inglesant stood silent a few moments, looking sadly down ; that other terrible figure, upon the white hearthstone, was so constantly in his mind, that this one, so like it, scarcely could be said to recall the image of his murdered brother ; but the whole scene certainly strengthened his morbid fancy, and it seemed to him that he was on the footsteps of the murderer, and that his fate was drawing near.

‘His steps are still in blood,’ he said aloud ; ‘and it is warm ; he cannot be far off.’

He turned, as he spoke, to look for the old man, but he was gone, and in his place a ghastly figure met Inglesant’s glance.

Standing about three feet from the table, a little behind Inglesant, and also looking fixedly at the murdered boy, was the figure of a corpse. The face was thin and fearfully white, and the whole figure was wrapped and swathed in grave-clothes, somewhat disordered and loosened, so as to give play to the limbs. This form took no notice of the other’s presence, but continued to gaze at the body with its pallid ghastly face.

Inglesant scarcely started. Nothing could seem more strange and unreal to him than what was passing on every side. That the dead should return and stand by him seemed to him not more fearful and unreal than all the rest.

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Suddenly the corpse turned its eyes upon Inglesant, and regarded him with a fixed and piercing glance.

‘You spoke of the author of this deed as though you knew him,’ it said.

‘I am on the track of a murderer, and my fate is urging me on. It seems to me that I see his bloody steps.’

‘This was no murder,’ said the corpse, in an irritated and impatient voice. ‘It was a chance *melée*, and an unfortunate and unhappy thrust ; we do not even know the name of the man who lies there. Are you the avenger of blood, that you see murder at every step ?’

‘I am in truth the avenger of blood,’ said Inglesant in a low and melancholy voice ; ‘would I were not.’

The corpse continued to look at Inglesant fixedly, and would have spoken, but the voices which had been heard in the garden now seemed to come nearer, and hurried steps approached the room. The laughter that Inglesant had heard was stilled, and deep and solemn voices strove together, and one above the rest said, ‘Bring up the murderer.’

The corpse turned round impatiently, and the next moment from a small door, which opened on a covered balcony and outside staircase to the garden, there came hurriedly in a troop of the most strange and fantastic figures that the eye could rest upon. Angels and demons, and

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savage men in lions' skins, and men with the heads of beasts and birds, swarmed tumultuously in, dragging with them an unfortunate being in his night-clothes, and apparently just out of bed, whom they urged on with blows. This man, who was only half-awake, was evidently in the extremity of terror, and looked upon himself as already in the place of eternal torment. He addressed now one and now another of his tormentors, as well as he could find breath, in the most abject terms, endeavouring, in the most ludicrous manner, to choose the titles and epithets to address them most in accordance with the individual appearance that the spectre he entreated wore to his dazzled eyes—whether a demon or an angel, a savage or a man-beast. When he saw the murdered man, and the terrible figure that stood by Inglesant, he nearly fainted with terror ; but, on many voices demanding loudly that he should be brought in contact with the body of his victim, he recovered a little, and recognizing in Inglesant, at least, a being of an earthly sphere, and by his dress a man of rank, he burst from his tormentors, and throwing himself at his feet, he entreated his protection, assuring him that he had been guilty of no murder, having just been dragged from a sound sleep, and being even ignorant that a murder had been committed.

Inglesant took little notice of him, but the corpse interposed between the man and the

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fantastic crew. It was still apparently in a very bad humour, especially with Inglesant, and said imperiously,—‘We have enough and too much of this foolery. Have not some of you done enough mischief for one night? This gentleman says he is on the track of a murderer, and will have it that he sees his traces in this unfortunate affair.’

At these words the masquers crowded round Inglesant with wild and threatening gestures, apparently half earnest and half the result of wine, and as many of them were armed with great clubs, the consequences might have seemed doubtful to one whose feelings were less excited than Inglesant’s were.

He, however, as though the proceeding were a matter of course, merely took off his hat, and addressed the others in explanation.

‘I am indeed in pursuit of a murderer, the murderer of my brother—a gallant and noble gentleman, who was slain foully in cold blood. The murderer was an Italian, his name Malvolti. Do any of you, signori, happen to have heard of such a man?’

There was a pause after this singular address, but the next moment a demon of terrific aspect forced his way to the front, saying in a tone of drunken consequence,—

‘I knew him formerly at Lucca ; he was well born and my friend.’

‘He was, and is, a scelerat and a coward,’

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said Inglesant, fiercely. 'It would be well to be more careful of your company, sir.'

'Have I not said he was my friend, sir?' cried the demon, furious with passion. 'Who will lend me a rapier?'

A silent and melancholy person, with the head of an owl, who had several under his arm, immediately tendered him one with a low bow, and the masquers fell back in a circle, while the demon, drawing his weapon, threw himself into an attitude and attacked Inglesant, who, after looking at him for a moment, also drew his rapier and stood upon his guard. It soon appeared that the demon was a very moderate fencer; in less than a minute his guard was entered by Inglesant's irresistible tierce, and he would have been infallibly run through the body had he not saved himself by rolling ignominiously on the ground.

This incident appeared to restore the corpse to good humour; it laughed, and turning to the masquers said,—

'Gentlemen, let me beg of you to disperse as quickly as possible before the day is any farther advanced. You know of the rendezvous at one o'clock. I will see the authorities as to this unhappy affair. Sir,' he continued, turning to Inglesant, 'you are, I believe, the friend of Don Agostino Chigi, whom he has been introducing into Florentine society; if it will amuse you to see a frolic of the Carnival carried out, of

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which this is only the somewhat unfortunate rehearsal, and will meet me this afternoon at two o'clock, at the Great Church in the Via Larga, I shall be happy to do my best to entertain you ; a simple domino will suffice. I am the Count Capece.'

Inglesant gave his name in return. He apologized for not accepting the Count's courtesy, on the plea of ill-health, but assured him he would take advantage of his offer to cultivate his acquaintance. They left the house together, the Count covering himself with a cloak, and Inglesant accompanied him to the office of police, from whence he went to his lodging and to his bed.

He arose early in the afternoon, and remembering the invitation he had received, he went out into the Via Larga. The streets formed a strange contrast to the stillness and calm of the cool morning. The afternoon was hot, and the city crowded with people of every class and rank. The balconies and windows of the principal streets were full of ladies and children ; trophies and embroideries hung from the houses and crossed the street. Strings of carriages and country carts, dressed with flowers and branches of trees, paraded the streets. Every variety of fantastic and grotesque costume, and every shade of colour, filled and confused the eye. Music, laughter, and loud talking filled the ear. Inglesant, from his simple costume and grave

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demeanour, became the butt of several noisy parties ; but used as he was to great crowds, and to the confused revelries of Courts, he was able to disentangle himself with mutual good-humour. He recognized his friends of the morning, who were performing a kind of comedy on a country cart, arched with boughs, in imitation of the oldest form of the itinerant theatre. He was recognized by them also, for, in a pause of the performance, as he was moving down a bye-street, he was accosted by one of the company, enveloped in a large cloak. He had no difficulty in recognizing beneath this concealment his antagonist of the morning, who still supported his character of demon.

‘ I offer you my apologies for the occurrences of this morning, signore,’ he said, ‘ having been informed by my friends more closely concerning them than I can myself recollect. I am also deeply interested in the person of whom you spoke, who formerly was a friend of mine ; and I must also have been acquainted with the signore, your brother, of which I am the more certain as your appearance every moment recalls him more and more to my mind. I should esteem it a great favour to be allowed to speak at large with you on these matters. If you will allow me to pay my respects at your lodgings, I will conduct you to my father’s house, il Conte Pericon di Visalvo, where I can show you many things which may be of interest to

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you respecting the man whom I understand you seek.'

Inglesant replied that he should gladly avail himself of his society, and offered to come to the Count's house early the next day.

He found the house, a sombre plain one, in a quiet street, with a tall front pierced with few windows. At the low door hung a wine-flask, as a sign that wine was sold within ; for the sale of wine by retail was confined to the gentry, the common people being only allowed to sell wholesale. The Count was the fortunate possessor of a very fine vineyard, which made his wine much in request, and Inglesant found the whole ground-floor of his house devoted to this retail traffic. Having inquired for the Count, he was led up the staircase into a vestibule, and from thence into the Count's own room. This was a large apartment with windows looking on to the court, with a suite of rooms opening beyond it. It was handsomely furnished, with several cages full of singing birds in the windows. Outside, the walls of the houses forming the courtyard were covered with vines and creeping jessamine and other plants, and a fountain splashed in the centre of the court, which was covered with a coloured awning.

The old Count received Inglesant politely. He was a tall, spare old man, with a reserved and dignified manner, more like that of a Spaniard than of an Italian. Rather to Inglesant's surprise

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he introduced him to his daughter, on whom, as she sat near one of the windows, Inglesant's eyes had been fixed from the moment he had entered the room. The Italians were so careful of the ladies of their families, and it was so unusual to allow strangers to see them, that his surprise was not unnatural, especially as the young lady before him was remarkably beautiful. She was apparently very young, tall and dark-eyed, with a haughty and indifferent manner, which concentrated itself entirely upon her father.

The Count noticed Inglesant's surprise at the cordiality of his reception, and seemed to speak as if in explanation.

'You are no stranger to us, signore,' he said ; 'my son has not only commended you to me, but your intimacy with Don Agostino has endeared you already to us who admire and love him.'

As Agostino had told him the evening before that he knew little of these people, though he believed the old Count to be respectable, this rather increased Inglesant's surprise ; but he merely said that he was fortunate in possessing a friend whose favour procured him such advantages.

'My son's affairs,' continued the old man, 'unavoidably took him abroad this morning, but I wait his return every moment.'

Inglesant suspected that the Cavaliere, who appeared to him to be a complete debauchée,

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had not been at home at all that night ; but if that were the case, when he entered the room a few moments afterwards, his manner was completely self-possessed and quiet, and showed no signs of a night of revelry.

As soon as they were seated the Cavaliere began to explain to Inglesant that both his father and himself were anxious to see him, to confer respecting the unfortunate circumstances which, as they imagined, had brought him to Italy upon a mission which they assured him was madly imprudent.

‘Our nation, signore,’ said the Cavaliere, ‘is notorious for two passions—jealousy and revenge. Both of these, combined with self-interest, induced Malvolti to commit the foul deed which he perpetrated upon your brother. While in Italy your brother crossed him in some of his amours, and also resented some indiscretions, which the manners of our nation regard with tolerance, but which your discreeter countrymen resent with unappeasable disgust. Our people never forgive injuries ; nay, they entail them on their posterity. We ourselves left our native city, Lucca, on account of one of these feuds, which made it unsafe for us to remain ; and I could show you a gentleman’s house in Lucca whose master has never set foot out of doors for nine years, nay, scarcely looked out of window, for fear of being shot by an antagonist who has several times planted ambushes to take away his life. It is

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considered a disgrace to a family that one of its members has forgiven an injury ; and a mother will keep the bloody clothes of her murdered husband, to incite her young sons to acts of vengeance. You will see, signore, the evil which such ideas as these wind about our lives ; and how unwise it must be in a stranger to involve himself needlessly in such an intrigue, in a foreign country, unknown and comparatively without friends. Italy swarms with bravoës hired to do the work of vengeance ; merchants are assaulted in their warehouses in open day ; in the public streets the highest personages in the land are not safe. What will be the fate then of a stranger whose death is necessary to the safety of an Italian ? ’

‘ I understand you, signore, ’ said Inglesant, ‘ and I thank you for your good-will, but you are somewhat mistaken. I am not seeking the man of whom we speak, though, I confess, I came to Italy partly with the expectation of meeting him, when it is the will of God, or the will of the Devil, whom He permits to influence the affairs of men, that this man and I should meet. I shall not attempt to avoid the interview ; it would be useless if I did. The result of that meeting who can tell ! But as I said yesterday to the Count Capece, till my hour comes I bear a charmed life that cannot be taken, and any result I regard with supreme indifference, if so be I may, by any means, escape in the end the snares of the

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Devil, who seeks to take me captive at his will.'

The two gentlemen regarded Inglesant with profound astonishment as he uttered these words ; and the young lady in the window raised her eyes towards him as he was speaking (he spoke very pure Italian) with some appearance of interest.

After a pause Inglesant went on, 'I also venture to think, signore,' he said, 'that you are unaware of the position of this man, and of the condition to which his crimes have brought him. I am well informed from sure sources that he is without friends, and that his crimes have raised him more enemies in this country even than elsewhere ; so that he is afraid to appear openly, lest he fall a victim to his own countrymen. He is also in abject poverty, and is therefore to a great extent powerless to do evil.'

The Cavaliere smiled. 'You do not altogether know this country, signore,' he said ; 'there are always so many different factions and interests at work that a daring useful man is never without patrons, who will support and further his private interests in return for the service he may render them ; and (though you may not be fully aware of it) it is because it is notorious that you are yourself supported and protected by a most powerful and widely spread faction, that your position in this country is as assured and safe as it is.'

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His words certainly struck Inglesant. The idea that he was already a known and marked man in this wonderful country, and playing an acknowledged part in its fantastic drama, was new to him, and he remained silent.

‘From all ordinary antagonists,’ continued the Cavaliere, ‘this knowledge is sufficient to secure you ; no man would wish, unless ruined and desperate, to draw on his head the swift and certain punishment which a hand raised against your life would be sure to invoke. But a reckless despairing man stops at nothing ; and should you, by your presence even, endanger this man’s standing in the favour of some new-found patron, or impede the success of some freshly planned scheme—perhaps the last hope of his ruined life—I would not buy your safety at an hour’s rate.’

While the Cavaliere was speaking it was evident that his sister was listening with great attention. The interest that she manifested, and the singular attraction that Inglesant felt towards her, so occupied his thoughts that he could scarcely attend to what the other was saying, though he continued speaking for some time. It is possible that the Cavaliere noticed this, for Inglesant was suddenly conscious that he was regarding him fixedly and with a peculiar expression. He apologized for his inattention on the ground of ill-health, and soon after took his leave, having invited the Cavaliere to visit him at his lodgings.

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As Inglesant walked back through the streets of the city, he was perplexed at his own sensations, which appeared so different from any he had previously known. The attraction he experienced towards the lady he had just seen was quite different from the affection he had felt for Mary Collet. That was a sentiment which commended itself to his reason and his highest feelings. In her company he felt himself soothed, elevated above himself, safe from danger and from temptation. In this latter attraction he was conscious of a half-formed fear, of a sense of glamour and peril, and of an alluring force independent of his own free-will. The opinion he had formed of her brother's character may have had something to do with these feelings, and the sense of perpetual danger and insecurity with which he walked this land of mystery and intrigue no doubt increased it. He half resolved not to visit the old nobleman again; but even while forming the resolution he knew that he should break it.

The circumstances in which he was placed, indeed, almost precluded such a course. The very remarkable beauty of the young lady, and the extraordinary unreserve with which he had been introduced to her—unreserve so unusual in Italy—while it might increase the misgiving he felt, made it very difficult for him to decline the acquaintance. The girl's beauty was of a kind unusual in Italy, though not unknown there, her

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hair being of a light brown, contrasting with her magnificent eyes, which were of the true Italian splendour and brilliancy. She had doubtless been kept in the strictest seclusion, and Inglesant could only wonder what could have induced the old Count to depart from his usual caution.

The next day, being Ash Wednesday, Inglesant was present at the Duomo at the ceremony of the day, when the vast congregation received the emblematic ashes upon their foreheads. The Cavaliere was also present with his sister, whose name Inglesant discovered to be Lauretta. Don Agostino, to whom Inglesant had related the adventure, and the acquaintance to which it had led, was inclined to suspect these people of some evil purpose, and made what inquiries he could concerning them ; but he could discover nothing to their discredit, further than that the Cavaliere was a well-known debauchée, and that he had been involved in some intrigue, in connection with some of the present Papal family, which had not proved successful. He was in consequence then in disgrace with Donna Olympia and her faction,—a disappointment which it was said had rendered his fortunes very desperate, as he was very deeply involved in debts of all kinds. Don Agostino, the Carnival being over, was desirous of returning to Sienna, unless Inglesant made up his mind to go at once to Venice, in which case he offered to accompany him. His friend, however, did not appear at all desirous

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of quitting Florence, at any rate hastily, and Don Agostino left him and returned home, the two friends agreeing to meet again before proceeding to Venice.

His companion gone, Inglesant employed himself in frequenting all those Churches to which Lauretta was in the habit of resorting during the Holy Season; and as every facility appeared to be given him by her friends, he became very intimate with her, and she on her part testified no disinclination to his society. It will probably occur to the reader that this conduct was not consistent with the cautious demeanour which Inglesant had resolved upon; but such resolutions have before now proved ineffectual under similar circumstances, and doubtless the like will occur again. Lauretta looked round as a matter of course, as she came out of the particular Church she had that day chosen, for the handsome cavalier who was certain to be ready to offer the drop of holy water; and more than one rival whom the beautiful devotee had attracted to the service, noticed with envy the kindly look of the masked eyes which acknowledged the courtesy; and, indeed, it is not often that ladies' eyes have rested upon a lover more attractive to a girl of a refined nature than did Lauretta's when, in the dawn of the March mornings, she saw John Inglesant waiting for her on the marble steps. It is true that she thought the Cavaliere

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Inglese somewhat melancholy and sad, but her own disposition was reserved and pensive ; and in her presence Inglesant's melancholy was so far charmed away that it became only an added grace of sweetness of manner, and of tender deference and protection. The servant of the polished King of England, the companion of Falkland and of Caernarvon, the French Princess's favourite page, trained in every art that makes life attractive, that makes life itself the finest art, with a memory and intellect stored with the poetry and learning of the antique world,—it would have been strange if, where once his fancy was touched, Inglesant had not made a finished and attractive lover.

The familiar streets of Florence, the bridges or the walks by the Arno, assumed a new charm to the young girl, when she saw them in company with her pleasant and courteous friend ; and whether in the early morning it was a few spring flowers that he brought her, or a brilliant jewel that he placed upon her finger as he parted in the soft Italian night, it was the giver, and the grace with which the gift was made, that won the romantic fancy of the daughter of the South. Their talk was not of the kind that lovers often use. He would indeed begin with relating stories of the English Court, in the bright fleeting days before the war, of the courtly refined revels, of the stately dances and plays, and of the

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boating parties on the wooded Thames; but most often the narrative changed its tone instinctively, and went on to speak of sadder and higher things; of self-denial and devotion of ladies and children, who suffered for their King without complaint; of the Ferrars and their holy life; of the martyred Archbishop and of the King's death; and sometimes perhaps of some sight of battle and suffering the narrator himself had seen, as when the evening sun was shining upon the grassy slope of Newbury, and he knelt beside the dying Caernarvon, unmindful of the bullets that fell around.

'You have deserved well of the King,' he said; 'have you no request that I may make to him, nothing for your children, or your wife?'

And with his eyes fixed upon the western horizon the Earl replied,—

'No, I will go hence with no request upon my lips but to the King of kings.'

How all this pleasant dalliance would have terminated, had it continued, we have no means of knowing, for a sudden and unexpected end was put to it, at any rate for a time.

Easter was over, and the Cavaliere had invited Inglesant to join in a small party to spend a day or two at his vineyard and country house among the Apennines, assuring him that at that time of the year the valleys and hill-slopes were very delightful.

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The evening before the day on which the little company was to start, Inglesant had an engagement at one of the theatres in Florence, where a comedy or pantomime was being performed. The comedies in Italy at this time were paltry in character in everything except the music, which was very good. Inglesant accompanied a Signore Gabriotto, a violin player, who was engaged at the theatre, and of whom Inglesant had taken lessons, and with whom he had become intimate. This man was not only an admirable performer on the violin, but was a man of cultivation and taste. He had given much study to the music of the ancients, and especially to their musical instruments, as they are to be seen in the hands of the Apollos, muses, fauns, satyrs, bacchanals, and shepherds of the classic sculptors. As they walked through the streets in the evening sunlight, he favoured his companion, whom he greatly admired as an excellent listener, with a long discourse on this subject, showing how useful such an inquiry was, not only to obtain a right notion of the ancient music, but also to help us to obtain pleasanter instruments if possible than those at present in use.

‘Not, signore,’ he said, ‘that I think we have much to learn from the ancients; for if we are to judge their instruments by the appearance they make in marble, there is not one that is comparable to our violins; for they

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seem, as far as I can make out, all to have been played on either by the bare fingers or the plectrum, so that they could not add length to their notes, nor could they vary them by that insensible swelling and dying away of sound upon the same string which gives so wonderful a sweetness to our modern music. And as far as I can see, their stringed instruments must have had very low and feeble voices from the small proportion of wood used (though it is difficult to judge of this, seeing that all our examples are represented in marble), which would prevent the instruments containing sufficient air to render the strokes full or sonorous. Now my violin,' continued the Italian with enthusiasm, 'does not speak only with the strings, it speaks all over, as though it were a living creature that was all voice, or, as is really the case, as though it were full of sound.'

'You have a wonderful advantage,' said Inglesant, 'you Italians, that is, in the cultivation of the art of life ; for you have the unbroken tradition, and habit and tone of mind, from the old world of pleasure and art—a world that took the pleasures of life boldly, and had no conscience to prevent its cultivating and enjoying them to the full. But I must say that you have not, to my mind, improved during the lapse of centuries, nor is the comedy we shall see to-night what might be expected of a people who are the

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descendants of the old Italians who applauded Terence.'

'The comedy to-night,' said the Italian, 'would be nothing without the music, the acting is a mere pretence.'

'The comedy itself,' said Inglesant, 'would be intolerable but for the buffoons, and the people show their sense in demanding that place shall be found in every piece for these worthies. The play itself is stilted and unreal, but there is always something of irony and wit in these characters, which men have found full of satire and humour for four thousand years : Harlequin the reckless fantastic youth, Pantaleone the poor old worn-out Senex, and Corviello the rogue. In their absurd impertinences, in their impossible combinations, in their mistakes and tumbles, in their falling over queens and running up against monarchs, men have always seemed to see some careless, light-hearted, half-indifferent sarcasm and satire upon their own existence.'

When they reached the theatre, the slant rays of the setting sun were shining between the lofty houses, and many people were standing about the doors. Inglesant accompanied the violinist to the door of the play-house, and took his place near the orchestra, at either end of which were steps leading up on to the stage. The evening sunlight penetrated into the house through venetian blinds, lighting up the fittings and the audience with a sort of mystic haze. The sides

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of the stage were crowded with gentlemen, some standing, others sitting on small stools. Many of the audience were standing, the rest seated on benches. The part occupied in modern theatres by the boxes was furnished with raised seats, on which ladies and people of distinction were accommodated. There was no gallery.

As the first bars of the overture struck upon Inglesant's ear, with a long-drawn tremor of the bass viols and a shrill plaintive note of the treble violins, an irresistible sense of loneliness and desolation and a strange awe crept over him and weighed down his spirits. As the fantastic music continued, in which gaiety and sadness were mysteriously mingled, the reverberation seemed to excite each moment a clearer perception of those paths of intrigue and of danger in which he seemed to walk. The uneasy sentiment which accompanied, he knew not why, his attachment to Lauretta, and the insidious friendship of the Cavaliere, the sense of insecurity which followed his footsteps in this land of dark and sinful deeds, passed before his mind. It seemed to his excited fancy at that moment that the end was drawing very near, and amid the fascination of the lovely music he seemed to await the note of the huntsman's horn which would announce that the toils were set, and that the chase was up. From the kind of trance in which he stood he was aroused by hearing a voice, distinct to his ear and perfectly audible,

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though apparently at some considerable distance, say,—

‘Who is that man by the curtain, in black satin, with the Point de Venice lace?’

And another voice, equally clear, answered, ‘His name is Inglesant, an agent of the Society of the Gesu.’

Inglesant turned; but, amid the crowd of faces behind him, he could discern nothing that indicated the speakers, nor did any one else seem to have noticed anything unusual. The next moment the music ceased, and with a scream of laughter Harlequin bounded on the stage, followed by Pantaleone in an eager and tottering step, and after them a wild rout of figures, of all orders and classes, who flitted across the stage amid the applause of the people, and suddenly disappeared, while Harlequin and Pantaleone as suddenly reappearing, began a lively dialogue, accompanied by a quick movement of the violins. As Inglesant took his eyes off the stage for a moment, they fell on the figure of a man standing on the flight of steps at the farther end of the orchestra, who regarded him with a fixed and scrutinizing gaze. He was a tall and dark man, whose expression would have been concealed from Inglesant but for the fiery brilliancy of his eyes. Inglesant’s glance met his as in a dream, and remained fixed as though fascinated, at which the gaze of the other became, if possible, more intense, as though he too were spell-

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bound and unable to turn away. At this moment the dialogue on the stage ceased, and a girl advanced to the footlights with a song, accompanied by the band in an air adapted from the overture, and containing a repetition of the opening bars. The association of sound broke the spell, and Inglesant turned his eyes upon the singer ; when he looked again his strange examiner was gone.

The girl who was singing was a Roman, reputed the best treble singer then in Italy. The sun by this time was set, and the short twilight over. The theatre was sparsely lighted by candles, nearly the whole of the available light being concentrated upon the stage. This arrangement produced striking effects of light and shade, more pleasing than are the brilliantly lighted theatres of modern days. The figures on the stage came forward into full and clear view, and faded again into obscurity in a mysterious way very favourable to romantic illusion, and the theatrical arrangements were not seen too clearly. The house itself was shadowy and the audience unreal and unsubstantial ; the whole scene wore an aspect of glamour and romance wanting at the present day.

When the girl's song was over there was a movement among the gentlemen on the stage, several coming down into the house. Inglesant took advantage of this, and went up on the stage, from which he might hope to see something of

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the stranger who had been watching him so closely, if he were still in the theatre.

Several of the actors who were waiting for their turn mingled with the gentlemen, talking to their acquaintance. The strange light thrown on the centre of the stage in which two or three figures were standing, the multitude of dark forms in the surrounding shadow, the dim recesses of the theatre itself full of figures, the exquisite music, now soft and plaintive, anon gay and dance-like, then solemn and melancholy, formed a singular and attractive whole. Lauretta had declined to come that night, but Inglesant thought it was not improbable that the Cavaliere would be there, and he was curious to see whether he could detect him in company with the mysterious stranger. From the moment that he had heard the distant voice inquiring his name the familiar idea had again occurred to his mind that this could be none other than the murderer of his brother, of whom he was in search ; but this thought had occurred so often, and in connection with so many persons, that had it not been for the fixed and peculiar glance with which the stranger had regarded him, he would have thought little of it. He was, however, unable to distinguish either of the persons of whom he was in search from the crowd that filled the theatre ; and his attention was so much diverted by the constantly changing scene before him that he soon ceased to attempt to do so. At

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that moment the opening movement of the overture was again repeated by the band, and was made the theme of an elaborate variation, in which the melancholy idea of the music was rendered in every variety of shade by the plaintive violins. Every phase of sorrow, every form and semblance of grief that Inglesant had ever known, seemed to float through his mind, in sympathy with the sounds which, inarticulate to the ear, possessed a power stronger than that of language to the mental sense. The anticipation of coming evil naturally connected itself with the person of Lauretta, and he seemed to see her lying dead before him upon the lighted stage, or standing in an attitude of grief, looking at him with wistful eyes. This last image was so strongly presented to his imagination that it partook almost of the character of an apparition; and before it the crowded theatre, the gaily dressed forms upon the stage, the fantastic actors, seemed to fade, and alone on the deserted boards the figure of Lauretta, as he had last seen it, slight and girl-like yet of noble bearing, stood gazing at him with wild and apprehensive eyes. Curiously too, as his fancy dwelt upon this figure, it saw in her hand a sealed letter fastened with a peculiarly twisted cord.

The burden of sorrow and of anticipated evil became at last too heavy to be borne, and Inglesant left the theatre and returned to his lodgings.

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But here he could not rest. Though he had no reason to visit the Count that night, and though it was scarcely seemly, indeed, that he should do so, yet, impelled by a restless discomfort which he sought to quiet, he wandered again into the streets, and found himself not unnaturally before the old nobleman's dwelling. Once here, the impulse was too strong to be denied, and he knocked at the low sunken door. The house seemed strangely quiet and deserted, and it was some time before an old servant who belonged to the lower part of the establishment, devoted to the sale of the wine, appeared at the wicket, and, on being assured whom it was who knocked at that unseasonable hour, opened the door.

The house was empty, he averred. The family had suddenly departed, whither he knew not. If the signore was pleased to go upstairs, he believed he would find some letters for him left by the Cavaliere.

Inglesant followed the old man, who carried a common brass lamp, which cast an uncertain and flickering glare, the sense of evil growing stronger at every step he took. His guide led him into the room in which he had first seen Lauretta, which appeared bare and deserted, but showed no sign of hasty departure. Upon a marble table inlaid with coloured stones were two letters, both directed to Inglesant. The one was from the Cavaliere, excusing their departure on the ground of sudden business of

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the highest political importance, the other from Laretta, written in a hasty trembling hand. It contained but a few lines—‘that she was obliged to follow her father ;’ but Inglesant hesitated a moment before he broke the seal, for it was tied round with a curiously twisted cord of blue and yellow silk, as he had seen in the vision his excited fancy had created.

CHAPTER XXII

LAURETTA's letter had informed Inglesant that she would endeavour to let him know where she was ; and with that hope he was obliged to be content, as by no effort he could make could he discover any trace of the fugitives' route. Florence, however, became distasteful to him, and he would have left it sooner but for an attack of fever which prostrated him for some time. Few foreigners were long in Italy, in those days, without suffering from the climate and the miasmas and unhealthy vapours, which, especially at night, were so hurtful even to those accustomed to the country. In his illness Inglesant was carefully nursed by some of the Jesuit Fathers, and those whom they recommended ; and it is possible that they took care that he should not be left too much to the care of the physicians, whose attentions, at that period at any rate, were so often fatal to their patients. In the course of a few weeks he was sufficiently recovered to think of leaving Florence, and he despatched a messenger to Don Agostino,

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begging him to meet him at Lucca, where they might decide either to visit Venice or go on straight to Rome. It was not without some lingering hope that he might find Lauretta in the town of her birth, that he set out for Lucca, but misfortune followed his path. It was reported that the plague had broken out in Florence, and travellers who were known to have come from thence were regarded with great suspicion. Inglesant's appearance, recently recovered from sickness, was not in his favour; and at Fucecchio, a small town on the road to Lucca, he was arrested by the authorities, and confined by them in the pest-house for forty days. It was a building which had formerly been a gentleman's house, and possessed a small garden surrounded by a high wall. In this dreary abode Inglesant passed many solitary days, the other inmates being three or four unfortunates like himself,—travellers on business through the country,—who, their affairs being injured by their detention, were melancholy and despondent. He was short of money, and for some time was unable to communicate with any of his friends either in Florence or Sienna. With nothing but his own misfortunes to brood upon, and with the apprehension of the future, which almost amounted to religious melancholy, frequently before his mind, it is surprising that he kept his reason. To add to his misfortunes, when the greater portion of the time

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fixed for his detention was expired, one of the inmates of the pest-house suddenly died ; and although the physicians pronounced his disease not to be the plague, yet the authorities decreed that all should remain another forty days within its dreary walls. The death of this person greatly affected Inglesant, as he was the only one of the inmates with whom he had contracted any intimacy.

During the first part of his sojourn here, there was brought to the house, as an inmate, a wandering minstrel, who, the first evening of his stay, attracted the whole of the gloomy society around him by his playing. He played upon a small and curiously shaped instrument called a *vielle*, somewhat like a child's toy, with four strings, and a kind of small wheel instead of a bow. It was commonly used by blind men and beggars in the streets, and was considered a contemptible instrument, though some of these itinerant performers attained to such skill upon it that they could make their hearers laugh and dance, and it was said even weep, as they stood around them in the crowded streets. Inglesant soon perceived that the man was no contemptible musician, and after his performance was over he entered into conversation with him, asking him why he, who could play so well, was content with so poor an instrument. The man, who appeared to have a great deal of intelligence and humour, said that he

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was addicted to a wandering and unsettled life, among the poorer and disorderly classes in the low quarters of cities, in mountain villages, and in remote hostelrys and forest inns; that the possession of a valuable viol, or other instrument, even if he should practise sufficient self-denial to enable him to save money to purchase such a one, would be a constant anxiety to him, and a source of danger among the wild companions with whom he often associated. 'Besides, signore,' he said, 'I am attached to this poor little friend of mine, who will speak to me though to none else. I have learnt the secrets of its heart, and by what means it may be made to discourse eloquently of human life. You may despise my instrument, but I can assure you it is far superior to the guitar, though that is so high-bred and genteel a gentleman, found in all romances and ladies' bowers. For any music that depends upon the touch of a string, and is limited in the duration of the distinct sounds, is far inferior to this little fellow's voice.'

'You seem trained to the profession of music,' said Inglesant.

'I was serving-lad to an old musician in Rome, who not only played on several instruments, but gave a great deal of time to the study of the science of harmony, and of the mysteries of music. He was fond of me, and taught me the viol, as I was apt to learn.'

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‘I have heard of musicians,’ said Inglesant, ‘who have written on the philosophy of sound. He was doubtless one of them.’

‘There are things concerning musical instruments,’ said the man, ‘very wonderful; such as the laws concerning the octaves of flutes, which, make them how you will, you can never alter, and which show how the principles of harmony prevail in the dead things of the world, which we think so blockish and stupid; and what is more wonderful still, the passions of men’s souls, which are so wild and untamable, are all ruled and kept in a strict measure and mean, for they are all concerned in and wrought upon by music. And what can be more wonderful than that a maestro in the art can take delight in sound, though he does not hear it; and when he looks at some black marks upon paper, he hears intellectually, and by the power of the soul alone?’

‘You speak so well of these things,’ said Inglesant, ‘that I wonder you are content to wander about the world at village fairs and country weddings, and do not rather establish yourself in some great town, where you might follow your genius and earn a competence and fame.’

‘I have already told you,’ replied the man, ‘that I am wedded to this kind of life; and if you could accompany me for some months, with your viol d’amore, across the mountains,

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and through the deep valleys, and into the old towns, where no travellers ever come, and where all stands still from century to century, you would never leave it, any more than I shall. I could tell you of many strange sights I have witnessed, and if we stay long in this place, perhaps you will be glad to hear some tales to while away the time.'

'You spoke but now,' said Inglesant, 'of the power that music has over the passions of men. I should like to hear somewhat more of this.'

'I will tell you a curious tale of that also,' said the man.

THE VIELLE-PLAYER'S STORY

'Some twenty-five years ago there lived in Rome two friends, who were both musicians, and greatly attached to each other. The elder, whose name was Giacomo Andrea, was maestro di capella of one of the Churches, the other was an accomplished lutenist and singer. The elder was a cavaliere and a man of rank; the younger of respectable parentage, of the name of Vanneo. The style of music in which each was engaged was sufficiently different to allow of much friendly contention; and many lively debates took place as to the respective merits of "Sonate da Chiesa" and "Sonate da Camera." Their respective instruments also afforded ground for friendly dispute. Vanneo was very desirous

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that his friend should introduce viols and other instruments into the service, in concert with the voices, in the Church in which Vanneo himself sang in the choir ; but the Cavaliere, who considered this a practice derived from the theatre, refused to avail himself of any instrument save the organ. Vanneo was more successful in inducing his friend to practise upon his favourite instrument the lute, though Andrea pretended at first to despise it as a ladies' toy, and liable to injure the shape of the performer. His friend, however, though devoted to secular music, brought to the performance and composition of it so much taste and correct feeling, that Andrea was ravished in spite of himself, and of his preference to the solemn music of the Church. Vanneo excelled in contrasting melancholy and pensive music with bright and lively chords, mingling weeping and laughter in some of the sweetest melodies that imagination ever suggested. He accompanied his own voice on the lute, or he composed pieces for a single voice with accompaniment for violins. In a word, he won his friend over to this grave chamber music, in some respects more pathetic and serious than the more monotonous masses and sonatas of the Church composers. Vanneo composed expressly for this purpose fantasies on the chamber organ, interposed, now and then, with stately and sweet dance music, such as Pavins (so named from the walk of a peacock),

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Almains, and other delightful airs, upon the violins and lute. In these fancies he blended, as it were, pathetic stories, gay festivities, and sublime and subtle ideas, all appealing to the secret and intellectual faculties, so that the music became not only an exponent of life but a divine influence. After these delightful meetings had continued for several years, circumstances obliged Vanneo to accompany a patron to France, and from thence he went over into England, to the great King of that nation, as one of his private musicians; for the Queen of England was a French Princess, and was fond of the lute. His departure was a great grief to the Cavaliere, who devoted himself more than ever to Church music and to the offices of religion. He was a man of very devout temper, and was distinguished for his benevolent disposition, and especially for his compassion for the poor, whom he daily relieved in crowds at his own door, and in the prisons of Rome, which he daily visited. From time to time he heard from his friend, to whom he continued strongly attached.'

'I was brought up at the English Court,' said Inglesant, 'and have been trying to recall such a man, but cannot recollect the name you mention, though I remember several lutenists and Italians.'

'I tell the story as I heard it,' replied the other. 'The man may have changed his name

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in a foreign country. One day the Cavaliere had received a letter from his friend, brought to him by some English gentleman travelling to Rome. Having read it, and spent some time with the recollections that its perusal suggested to his mind, he set himself to the work in which he was engaged—the composition of a motet for some approaching festival of the Church ; but although he attempted to fix his mind upon his occupation, and was very anxious to finish his work, he found himself unable to do so. The remembrance of his friend took complete possession of his mind ; and his imagination, instead of dwelling on the solemn music of the motet, wandered perversely into the alluring world of phantasied melody which Vanneo had composed. Those sad and pensive adagios, passing imperceptibly into the light gaiety of a festival, never seemed so delightful as at that moment. He rose from time to time, and walked to and fro in his chamber, and as he did so he involuntarily took up a lute which Vanneo had left with him as a parting gift, and which always lay within reach. As he carelessly touched the strings, something of his friend's spirit seemed to have inspired him, and the lute breathed again with something of the old familiar charm. Each time that he took it up, the notes formed themselves again under his hand into the same melody, and at last he took up a sheet of paper, intended for the motet, and scored down the air

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he had involuntarily composed. His fancy being pleased with the occurrence, he elaborated it into a lesson, and showed it to several of his associates. He gave it the name of "gli amici," and it became very popular among the masters in Rome as a lesson for their pupils on the lute. Among those who thus learnt it was a youth who afterwards became page to a Florentine gentleman, one Bernard Guasconi, who went into England and took service under the King of that country, who, as you doubtless know better than I do, was at war with his people.'

'I know the Cavaliere Gausconi,' said Inglesant, 'and saw him lately in Florence, where he is training running horses for the Grand Duke.'

'This war,' continued the man, 'appears to have been the ruin of Vanneo; for the English people, besides hating their King, took to hating all kinds of music, and all Churches and choristers. Vanneo lost his place as one of the King's musicians, and not being able to earn his living by teaching music where so few cared to learn, he was forced to enlist as a soldier in one of the King's armies, and was several times near losing his life. He escaped these dangers, however; but the army in which he served being defeated and dispersed, he wandered about the country, wounded, and suffering from sickness and want of food. He supported himself miserably, partly by charity, especially among the Loyalist families, and partly by giving singing

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lessons to such as desired them. He was without friends, or any means of procuring money to enable him to return to Italy. As he was walking in this manner one day in the streets of London, without any hope, and with scarcely any life, he heard the sound of music. It was long since the melody of a lute, once so familiar, had fallen on his ear ; and as he stopped to listen, the notes came to him through the thick moist air like an angelic and divine murmur from another world. The music seemed to come from a small room on the ground-floor of a poor inn, and Vanneo opened the door and went in. He found a young man, plainly dressed, playing on a double-necked theorbo-lute, which, from the number of its strings, enables, as you know, the skilful lutinist to play part music, with all the varieties of fugues and other graces and ornaments of the Italian manner. The piece which the young man was playing consisted of an allegro and yet sweet movement on the tenor strings, with a sustained harmony in thorough bass. The melody, being carefully distributed through the parts, spoke to Vanneo of gaiety and cheerfulness, as of his old Italian life, strangely combined at the same time with a soothing and pathetic melancholy, like a corpse carried through the streets of a gay city, strewn with flowers and accompanied with tapers and singing of boys. The whole piece finished with a pastorale, or strain of low and sweet notes. As Vanneo

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listened he was transported out of himself. It was not alone the beauty of the music which ravished him, but he was conscious that a mysterious presence, as of his friend the Cavaliere, was with him, and that at last the perfect sympathy which he had sought so long was established ; and that in the music he had heard a common existence and sphere of life was at last created, in which they both lived, not any longer separate from each other, but enjoying as it were one common being of melody and ecstatic life of sound. When the music ceased Vanneo accosted the lutinist and inquired the name of the composer ; but this the young man could not tell him. He only knew it was a favourite lesson for skilful pupils among the music-masters in Rome, and as such he had learnt it. Vanneo was confident the piece had been written by Andrea, and by none other, and told the young man so. By this time they had discovered that they were fellow-countrymen, and the lutinist sent for refreshments, of which Vanneo stood very much in need. He also told him that his name was Scacchi, and that he was page to the Signore Bernard Guasconi, who was then in arms for the King, and was besieged in some town of which I have forgotten the English name.'

'It was Colchester,' said Inglesant ; 'I was in prison at the time of the siege ; but I know the history of it and its sad ending.'

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‘Becoming very familiar with Vanneo, he advised him to accompany him to Colchester. His master, he said, would doubtless be set at liberty immediately as a foreigner and a friend of the Grand Duke’s, and he could accompany him home to Italy as a domestic. As no better prospect was open to Vanneo of returning to his native country, he gladly accepted the page’s offer, and agreed to accompany him next day. The besiegers of the town which you call Colchester were engaging persons from all parts of the country to work their trenches, and the town not being far from London, many persons went from that place to earn the wages offered. Many of the Loyalists also took advantage of this pretext, intending to join the besieged if a favourable opportunity offered. To one of these parties Vanneo and the page joined themselves. You may wonder that I know so much of these matters, but I have heard the story several times repeated by the page himself. The weather was very cold and wet, and the companions underwent much hardship on their march. They travelled through a flat and marshy country, full of woods and groves of trees, and crossed with dykes and streams. Vanneo, however, who had endured so much privation and suffering, began to sink under his fatigues. After travelling for more than two days they arrived at the leaguer. They were told that the besieged were expected every day to sur-

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render at discretion ; but they were sent into the trenches with several other volunteers to relieve those already there, many of whom were exhausted with the work, and were deserting. As they arrived at the extreme limit of the lines the besiegers had planted four great pieces of battering cannon against the town, and fired great shot all the forenoon, without, however, doing much damage. The Royalists mustered all their troops upon the line, intending, as it afterwards appeared, to break out at night and force their way through the leaguer. The lines were so close that the soldiers could throw stones at each other as they lay in the trenches ; and Vanneo and the page could see the King's officers plainly upon the city walls. The Royalists did not fire, being short of ammunition, and in the night a mutiny took place among some of the foot-soldiers, which prevented the project of cutting their way out from taking effect. The soldiers of both armies were now already mixed on many places upon the line, and no fire was given on either side, as though the Royalists were already prisoners. The page left Vanneo, who was worn-out and ill, and easily made his way into the town, where he found his master. When he returned to the trenches he found Vanneo very ill, and a physician with him, a doctor of the town, named Gibson, as I remember, who told the page that he thought his companion was dying.

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Vanneo, in fact, appeared to be insensible, his eyes were closed, and he was perfectly pale. He lay in a small house, just within the lines, which had been deserted by its inhabitants, who were weavers. The gentlemen were under arrest in the town, and it was reported that several were to be immediately shot, of whom it was whispered the Signore Guasconi was to be one. About two in the afternoon the general of the besieging army entered the town, and a great rabble of the soldiers with him. The latter broke into many houses to search for plunder, and among them into that in which Vanneo was lying. As they came into the room and saw the dying man, they stopped and began to question the page as to who he was. Before he could reply Vanneo opened his eyes with a smile, raised himself suddenly from the straw on which he lay, and, stretching out his hand eagerly as one who welcomes a friend, exclaimed in Italian, "Cavaliere, the consonance is complete"; and having said this he fell back upon the straw again, and, the smile still upon his face, he died.'

The musician stopped a moment, and then glancing at Inglesant with a curious look said, 'It is confidently said that about that very moment the Cavaliere Andrea died at Rome; at any rate, when the page returned to Italy and inquired for him at Rome, he was dead.'

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He caught a fever in one of his visits to the prisons, and died in a few days.'

'Did the page tell you of the two gentlemen who were shot at Colchester?' said Inglesant.

'Yes, he told me that Guasconi stood by with his doublet off expecting his turn; but when the others were shot he was taken back to his prison. They only found out he was an Italian by his asking leave to write to the Grand Duke.'

'I have been told,' he continued, 'that this poor King was a great lover of music, and played the bass viol himself.'

'He was a great admirer of Church music,' said Inglesant; 'I have often seen him appoint the service and anthems himself.'

As the conversation of this man was a great entertainment to Inglesant, so his sudden and unexpected death was a great shock to him. The physician could give no clear explanation of his disease, and the general opinion was that he died of the plague, though it was, of course, the interest of every one in the pest-house that this should not be acknowledged.

A few days after the burial two of the Jesuit Fathers arrived from Florence, accompanied by Don Agostino, who, having in vain waited for his friend at Lucca, had sought him at Florence, and finally traced him to his dreary prison. By their influence Inglesant was allowed to depart; and actuated still by his desire to see Venice, set out, accompanied by Don Agostino, in the

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hope of reaching that city. They crossed the Apennines, and journeyed by Modena, Mantua, Verona, and Padua. These places, which at other times would have excited in Inglesant the liveliest interest, were passed by him now as in a dream. The listless indifference which grew day by day developed at Padua into absolute illness ; and Agostino took lodgings for his friend in one of the deserted palaces of which the city was full. A few days' rest from travel, and from the excitement produced by novel scenes and by the scorching plains, had a soothing and beneficent effect ; but Venice being reported to be at that time peculiarly unhealthy, and Inglesant becoming sensible that he was physically unable to prosecute any inquiries there, the friends resolved to abandon their journey in that direction, and to return towards Rome. At this juncture Don Agostino received letters which compelled him to return hastily to Sienna, and after spending a few days with his friend, he left, promising to return shortly and accompany Inglesant to Rome, when he was sufficiently recruited by a few weeks' repose.

The failure of the silk trade, owing to the importation of silk from India into Europe, had destroyed the prosperity of many parts of Italy ; and in Padua long streets of deserted mansions attested by their beauty the wealth and taste of the nobility, whom the loss of the rents of their mulberry groves had reduced to ruin. Many

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houses being empty, rents were exceedingly cheap, and the country being very plentiful in produce, and the air very good, a little money went a long way in Padua. There was something about the quiet gloomy town, with its silent narrow streets and its winding dim arcades,—by which you might go from one end of the city to the other under a shady covert,—that soothed Inglesant's weary senses and excited brain.

His was that sad condition in which the body and the mind, being equally, like the several strings of an ill-kept lute, out of tune, jarred upon each other, the pains of the body causing phantasms and delusions of the mind. His disappointment and illness at Florence, his long confinement in the pest-house, and the sudden death of his friend the poor musician, preyed upon his spirits and followed him even in his dreams; and his body being weakened by suffering, and his mind depressed by these gloomy events and images, the old spiritual terrors returned with augmented force. Nature herself, in times of health and happiness so alluring and kind, turns against the wretch thus deprived of other comfort. The common sights and events of life, at one time so full of interest, became hateful to him; and amid the solemn twilights and gorgeous sunsets of Italy, his imagination was oppressed by an intolerable presentiment of coming evil. Finally, he despaired of himself, his past life became hateful to him, and nothing

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in the future promised a hope of greater success. He saw himself the mere tool of a political faction, and to his disordered fancy as little better than a hireling bravo and mercenary. The rustling of leaves, the falling of water, the summer breeze, uttered a pensive and melancholy voice, which was not soothing, but was like the distant moaning of sad spirits foreboding disaster and disgrace. On his first arrival in Padua Don Agostino had introduced him to two or three ecclesiastics, whose character and conversation he thought would please his friend ; but Inglesant made little effort to cultivate their acquaintance. His principal associate was the Prior of the Benedictine monastery, a mile or two beyond the Ferrara Gate, who, becoming at last distressed at his condition, advised him to consult a famous physician named Signore Giovanni Zecca.

This man had the reputation of a wit, maintained chiefly by a constant study of Boccalini's *Parnassus*, with quotations from which work he constantly adorned his discourse. He found Inglesant prostrate on a couch in his apartment, with the Prior by his side. The room had been the state reception-room of the former possessor, and the windows, which were open, looked upon the wide space within one of the gates. It was the most busy part of the city, and for that reason the rooms had been chosen by Don Agostino, as commanding the most agreeable and lively prospect.

The Prior having explained to the physician

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the nature of Inglesant's malady, as far as he was acquainted with it, inquired whether the situation of the rooms seemed suitable to the doctor, or whether it would be well to remove to some country house. The scene from the windows indeed was very lively, and might be considered too distracting for an invalid. The prospect commanded the greater part of the Piazza, or Place d'Armes, the gate and drawbridges and the glacis outside, with a stretch of country road beyond, lined with poplars. This extensive stage was occupied by ever-varying groups,—soldiers on guard in stiff and picturesque uniform, men carrying burdens, pack-horses, oxen, now and then a carriage with a string of horses and with running footmen, peasant women, priests, children, and beggars, with sometimes a puppet-show, or a conjuror with apes, and side by side with these last, in strange incongruity, the procession of the Host.

‘From what I know of this gentleman's malady and disposition,’ said the physician, ‘I should suppose that these sights and sounds, though perhaps hurtful to his physical nature, are so dear to his moral nature that to speak against them were useless. These sounds, though physically unpleasant, contain to the philosophic mind such moral beauty as to be attractive in the highest degree, and to such a nature as this my patient possesses offer a fascination which it would be unwise to contend against.’

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‘If,’ said the Prior to Inglesant with a smile, ‘your case requires philosophic treatment, you are fortunate in having secured the advice of Signore Zecca, who has the reputation of a philosopher and wit, as well as that of a most skilful physician.’

‘With respect to my calling as a physician, I may make some claim certainly,’ said the doctor, ‘if descent has any title to confer excellence, for my great-grandfather was that celebrated Giovanni Zecca, after whom I am named, the Physician of Bologna, whom you will find mentioned in the most witty *Ragguagli* of Messere Trajano Boccalini; therefore, if I fail in my profession, it is not for want of generations of experience and precept; but as regards my proficiency as a philosopher, I have no one to depend upon but myself, and my proficiency is indeed but small.’

‘You are pleased to say so, Signore Fisico,’ said Inglesant languidly, ‘with the modesty usual with great minds; nevertheless the remark which you have just made shows you to be familiar with the deepest of all philosophy, that of human life. It is my misfortune that I am too deeply impressed already with the importance of this philosophy, and it is my inadequate following of its teaching which is killing me.’

‘It is a subject of curious study,’ said the physician, ‘for perplexity perhaps, certainly for

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much satire, but scarcely, I should think, for martyrdom. The noblest things in life are mixed with the most ignoble, great pretence with infinite substance, vain-glory with solidness. The fool of one moment, the martyr of the next : as in the case of that Spaniard mentioned by Messere Boccalini, whose work doubtless you know, signore, but if not, I should recommend its perusal as certain to do much to work your cure. This man—the Spaniard I mean—dying most gallantly upon the field of honour, entreated his friend to see him buried without unclothing him ; and with these words died. His body being afterwards examined, it was found that he who was so sprucely dressed, and who had a ruff about his neck so curiously wrought as to be of great value, had never a shirt on his back. This discovery caused great laughter among the vulgar sort of mankind ; but by order of Apollo, the great ruler of learning and philosophy, this Spaniard was given a public and splendid funeral, equal to a Roman triumph ; and an oration was pronounced over him, who was so happy that, in his great calamity, he was careful of his reputation before his life. His noble funeral seems to me rather to proclaim the fact that our worst meannesses cannot deprive us of the dignity of that pity which is due to human nature standing by the brink of an open grave. A man has mistaken the secret of human life who does not look for

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greatness in the midst of folly, for sparks of nobility in the midst of meanness; and the well-poised mind distributes with impartiality the praise and the blame.'

'It is my misfortune,' replied Inglesant, 'that my mind is incapable of this well-poised impartiality, but is worn out by the unworthy conflict which the spirit within us wages with the meannesses of life. As the Psalmist says, "The very abjects make mouths at me, and cease not."'

'You are like those people, signore,' said the physician, 'mentioned by Messere Boccalini, whom the greatest physicians failed to cure, but who were immediately restored to active health by the simple and common remedies of a quack. You seek for remedies among the stars and the eternal verities of creation, whereas your ailment of mind arises doubtless from some physical derangement, which perchance a learner in healing might overcome.'

'The fatal confusion of human life,' said Inglesant, 'is surely too obvious a fact to be accounted for by the delusions of physical disease.'

The physician looked at Inglesant for a moment, and said,—

'Some time, signore, I will tell you a story, not out of Boccalini, which perchance will convince you that, strange as it may seem, the realities of life and the delusions of disease are not so dissimilar as you think.'

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‘If it be so,’ said Inglesant, ‘your prescription is more terrible than my complaint.’

‘I do not see that,’ replied the other. ‘I have said nothing but what should show you how unwise you will be, if you overlook the bodily ailment in searching into the diseases of the soul.’

‘I am well aware,’ replied Inglesant, ‘that my ailment is one of the body as well as of the mind ; but were my body made perfectly whole and sound, my cure could scarcely be said to be begun.’

‘I hold that most of the sorrows and perplexities of the mind are to be traced to a diseased body,’ replied the physician, not paying much attention to what his patient said ; ‘the passion of the heart, heavy and dull spirits, vain imaginations, the vision of spectres and phantoms, grief and sorrow without manifest cause,—all these things may be cured by purging away melancholy humours from the body, especially as I conceive from the meseraic veins ; and the heart will then be comforted, in the taking away the material cause of sorrow, which is not to be looked for in the world of spirits, nor in any providential government of God, nor even in outward circumstances and perplexities, but in the mechanism of the body itself.’

‘What cures do you propound that may be hoped to work such happy results ?’ said the Prior, for Inglesant did not speak.

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‘We have many such cures in physics—physics studied by the light of the heavenly science,’ said the physician; ‘such as the *Saturica Sancti Juliani*, which grows plentifully on the rough cliffs of the Tyrrhenian Sea, as the old Greek chronographers called it, called St. Julian’s Rock; the *Epithymum*, or thyme, which is under Saturn, and therefore very fitted for melancholy men; the *Febrifuga*, or, in our Italian tongue, *Artemisia Tenuifolia*, good for such as be melancholy, sad, pensive, and without power of speech; the distilled water of the *Fraga*, or Strawberry, drunk with white wine reviveth the spirits, and as the holy Psalmist says, “*Lætificat cor hominis*”; and the herb *Panax*, which grows on the top of the Apennine, and is cherished in all the gardens of Italy for its wonderful healing qualities; but the liquor of it, which you may buy in Venice, is not distilled in Italy, but is brought from Alexandria, a city of Egypt.’

‘You do not speak of the chemical medicines,’ said Inglesant, ‘which were much thought of in England when I was in Oxford; and many wonderful cures were worked by them, though I remember hearing that the young doctor who first introduced them, and wrought some great cures, died himself soon after.’

‘I have indeed no faith in the new doctrine of chemical compositions and receipts,’ said the physician, ‘which from mere empirics must

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needs be very dangerous, but from a man that is well grounded in the old way may do strange things. The works of God are freely given to man. His medicines are common and cheap ; it is the medicines of the new physicians that are so dear and scarce to find.'

Signore Zecca soon after took his leave, promising to send Inglesant a cordial, the ingredients of which he said were gathered on 'a Friday in the hour of Jupiter,' and which would be sufficient to give sleep, pleasant dreams, and quiet rest to the most melancholy man in the world. For, as he sensibly observed, 'waking is a symptom which much tortures melancholy men, and must therefore be speedily helped, and sleep by all means procured. To such as you especially, who have what I call the temperament of sensibility, are fearful of pain, covet music and sleep, and delight in poetry and romance, sleep alone is often a sufficient remedy.'

The doctor frequently visited Inglesant, who found his humour and curious learning entertaining ; and on one occasion, when they were alone together, he reminded him of his promise to relate a story which would prove his assertion that the ills of the soul were occasioned by those of the body.

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NOTE.—The MSS. are here imperfect.

CHAPTER XXIII

IN spite, however, of the reasonings and prescriptions of the physician, the oppression upon Inglesant's brain became more intolerable. Every new object seemed burnt into it by the sultry outward heat, and by his own fiery thoughts. The livid scorched plains, with the dark foliage, the hot piazzas and highways, seemed to him thronged with ghastly phantoms, all occupied more or less in some evil or fruitless work. As to his physical sense all objects seemed distorted and awry, so to his mental perception the most ordinary events bore in them the germs, however slight, of that terrible act of murderous terror that had marred and ruined his own life. In some form or other, in the passionate look, in the gambler's gesture, in the lover's glance, in the juggler's grimace, in the passion of the little child, he saw the stealthy trail of the Italian murderer, before whose cowardly blow his brother fell. The cool, neglected courts of Padua afforded no relief to his racked brain, no solace to his

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fevered fancy. He frequented the shadowed churches and the solemn masses daily without comfort; for his conscience was once more weighted with the remembrance of Serenus de Cressy, and of his own rejection of the narrow path of the Holy Cross. A sense of oppression and confusion rested upon him mentally and physically, so that he could see no objects steadily and clearly; but without was a phantasmagoria of terrible bright colours, and within a mental chaos and disorder without a clue. A constant longing filled his mind to accept De Cressy's offer, and he would have returned to France but for the utter impossibility of making the journey in his condition of health. He withdrew himself more and more from society, and at last, without informing his friends of his intention, he retired to a small monastery without the city, about a mile from the Traviso Gate, and requested to be admitted as a novice. The result of this step at the outset was beneficial; for the perfect seclusion, and the dim light of the cells and shaded garden, relieved the brain, and restored the disordered sense of vision.

It was some time before Don Agostino received intelligence, through the Prior, of this step of his friend's. He immediately came to Padua, and had several interviews with Inglesant, but apparently failed to produce any impression upon him. He then returned to Florence, and

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induced the Cardinal Rinuccini, from whose influence upon Inglesant he hoped much, to accompany him to Padua.

The Cardinal was a striking-looking and singularly handsome man, his countenance resembling the reputed portraits of Molière, whose bust might be taken for that of a pagan god. There was the same open, free expression, as of a man who confined his actions by no bounds, who tasted freely of that tree of good and evil, which, it is reported, transforms a man into a god, and of that other tree which, since the flaming sword of the cherubim kept the way to the true, has passed in the world for the tree of life ; who had no prejudices nor partialities, but included all mankind, and all the opinions of men, within the wide range of perfect tolerance and lofty indifference. He found Inglesant in his novice's dress walking in the small walled-in garden of the monastery, beneath the mulberry trees, his breviary in his hand. After the first greeting the Cardinal inquired touching his health.

'You are familiar with English, Eminence,' replied Inglesant, 'and remember Hamlet ; and you will therefore understand the state of a man for whom the world is too strong.'

'It is only the weak,' replied the Cardinal, 'for whom the world is too strong. You know what Terence says, "*Ita vita est hominum quasi cum ludas tesseris*," or, as we should rather say, "Life is like a game of cards"; you cannot

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control the cards, but of such as turn up you must make the most.'

'*Illud quod cecidit forte, id arte ut corrigas.*'

'The freewill, the reason, and the power of self-command, struggle perpetually with an array of chance incidents, of mechanical forces, of material causes, beyond foresight or control, but not beyond skilful management. This gives a delicate zest and point to life, which it would surely want if we had the power to frame it as we would. We did not make the world, and are not responsible for its state ; but we can make life a fine art, and, taking things as we find them, like wise men, mould them as may best serve our own ends.'

'We are not all wise, your Eminence, and the ends that some of us make our aim are far beyond our reach.'

'I was ever moderate in my desires,' said the Cardinal with a smile ; 'I shoot at none of these high-flying game. I am content to live from day to day, and leave the future to the gods ; in the meantime sweetening life as I can with some pleasing toys here and there, to relish it.'

'You have read Don Quixote, Eminence,' said Inglesant ; 'and no doubt hold him to have been mad.'

'He was mad, doubtless,' replied the Cardinal, smiling.

'I am mad, like him,' replied the other.

'I understand you,' said the Cardinal ; 'it is a

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noble madness, from which we inferior natures are free ; nevertheless, it may be advisable for a time to consult some worldly physician, that by his help this nobleness may be preserved a little longer upon earth and among men.'

'No worldly physician knows the disease, much less the cure,' said Inglesant. 'Don Quixote died in his bed at last, talked down by petty commonplace, acknowledging his madness, and calling his noble life a mistake ; how much more shall I, whose life has been the more ignoble for some transient gleams of splendour which have crossed its path in vain ! The world is too strong for me, and heaven and its solution of life's enigma too far off.'

'There is no solution, believe me,' said the Cardinal, 'no solution of life's enigma worth the reading. But suppose there be, you are more likely to find it at Rome than here. Put off that monk's dress, and come with me to Rome. What solution can you hope to find, brooding on your own heart, on this narrow plot of grass, shut in by lofty walls ? You, and natures like yours, make this great error ; you are moralizing and speculating upon what life ought to be, instead of taking it as it is ; and in the meantime it slips by you, and you are nothing, and life is gone. I have heard, and you doubtless, in a fine concert of viols, extemporary descant upon a thorough bass in the Italian manner, when each performer in turn plays such variety of descant,

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in concordance to the bass, as his skill and present invention may suggest to him. In this manner of play the consonances invariably fall true upon a given note, and every succeeding note of the ground is met, now in the unison or octave, now in the concords, preserving the melody throughout by the laws of motion and sound. I have thought that this is life. To a solemn bass of mystery and of the unseen, each man plays his own descant as his taste or fate suggests; but this manner of play is so governed and controlled by what seems a fatal necessity, that all melts into a species of harmony; and even the very discords and dissonances, the wild passions and deeds of men, are so attuned and adjusted that without them the entire piece would be incomplete. In this way I look upon life as a spectacle, "in theatro ludus." Have you sat so long that you are tired already of the play?

'I have read in some book,'¹ said Inglesant, 'that it is not the play—only the rehearsal. The play itself is not given till the next life. But for the rest your Eminence is but too right. There is no solution within my own heart, and no help within these walls.'

There can be little doubt that had Inglesant remained much longer in the monastery, he would have sunk into a settled melancholy. The quiet and calm, while it soothed his brain

¹ What this book is, I do not know. The remark was made by Jean Paul, in *Hesperus*, some hundred years after Inglesant's day.

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and relieved it of the phantoms that distracted it, allowed the mind to dwell exclusively upon those depressing thoughts and ideas which were exhausting his spirit and reducing him wellnigh to despair. However undesirable at other times the Cardinal's philosophic paganism might be, no doubt, at this moment, his society was highly beneficial to Inglesant, to whom, indeed, his conversation possessed a peculiar charm. It could, indeed, scarcely fail to attract one who himself sympathized with that philosophy of tolerance of, and attraction to, the multiform aspects of life which Paganism and the Cardinal equally followed. On the other hand, Rinuccini had from the first been personally strongly attracted towards Inglesant, and, as a matter of policy, attached just importance to securing his services, both on account of what he had learnt from his brother, and from the report of the Jesuits.

After some further conversation the Cardinal returned to Padua in triumph, bringing Inglesant with him, whom he loaded with kindness and attention. A suite of apartments was placed at his disposal, certain of the Cardinal's servants were ordered to attend him, and the finest horses were devoted to his use on the approaching journey. After waiting in Padua some days, to make preparations which were necessary in the neglected state of Inglesant's affairs, they set out for Rome. Don Agostino was still in Florence,

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the politics of his family not suffering him to visit the papal city at present.

Their first day's journey took them, through the fertile and well-cultivated Venetian States, to Rovigo, where they crossed the Po, dividing the territory of the Republic from the Ferrarese, which State had lately been acquired by the Pope.

This country, which, while it possessed princes of its own, had been one of the happiest and most beautiful parts of Italy, was now abandoned and uncultivated to such an extent that the grass was left unmown on the meadows. At Ferrara, a vast city which appeared to Inglesant like a city of the dead as he walked through streets of stately houses without an inhabitant, the chief concourse of people was the crowd of beggars who thronged round the Cardinal's coach. After dinner Inglesant left his companion, who liked to linger over his wine, and walked out into the quiet streets. The long, deserted vistas of this vast city, sleeping in the light and shadow of the afternoon sun, disturbed now and then only by a solitary footstep, pleased his singular fancies as Padua had done. He entered several of the Churches, which were mean and poorly adorned, and spoke to several of the priests and loiterers. Everywhere he heard complaints of the poverty of the place, of the misery of the people, of the bad unwholesome air, caused by the dearth of inhabitants to cultivate the land. When he

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came to inquire into the causes of this, most held their peace ; but one or two idlers, bolder or more reckless than the rest, seeing that he was a foreigner, and ignorant that he was riding in the train of the Cardinal, whispered to him something of the severity of the Papal government, and of the heavy taxes and frequent confiscations by which the nephews of several Popes had enriched themselves, and devoured many of the principal families of the city, and driven away many more. 'They talk of the bad air,' said one of these men to Inglesant ; 'the air was the same a century ago, when this city was flourishing under its own princes—princes of so eminent a virtue, and of so heroical a nobleness, that they were really the Fathers of their country. Nothing,' he continued, with a mute gesture of the hands, 'can be imagined more changed than this is now.'

'But Bologna is under the Pope, also,' said Inglesant, 'and is flourishing enough.'

'Bologna,' he answered, 'delivered itself up to the Popedom upon a capitulation, by which there are many privileges reserved to it. Crimes there are only punished in the persons of those who commit them. There are no confiscations of estates ; and the good result of these privileges is evident, for, though Bologna is neither on a navigable river nor the centre of a sovereignty where a Court is kept, yet its happiness and wealth amaze a stranger ; while we,

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once equally fortunate, are like a city in a dream.'

Inglesant returned to the inn to the Cardinal, and related what he had heard ; to all which dismal stories the Prelate only replied by significant gesture.

The next morning, however, as he was entering his carriage, followed by his friend, he seemed to take particular notice of the crowd of beggars that surrounded the inn. In Inglesant's eyes they only formed part (together with the strange, quiet streets, the shaded gardens, and the ever-changing scenes of their journey) in that shifting phantasm of form and colour, meaningless to him, except as it might suddenly, and in some unexpected way, become a part and scene of the fatal drama that had seized upon and crippled his life. But to the Cardinal, who had the training of a politician, though he subordinated politics to enjoyment, these swarms of beggars and these decaying States had at times a deeper interest.

'These people,' he said, as the carriage moved on, 'certainly seem very miserable, as you told me last night. To those whose tastes lay that way, it would not be a useless business to inquire into these matters, and to try to set them right. Some day, probably far distant, some of us, or those like us who clothe in scarlet and fine linen, will have to pay a reckoning for these things.'

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‘They are less unhappy than I am,’ said Inglesant. ‘As to the luxurious persons of whom you speak, it has been my fate to be of their party all my life, and to serve them for very poor reward ; and I doubt not that, when their damnation, of which your Eminence speaks, arrives, I shall share it with them. But it might seem to one who knows little of such things that some such attempt might be looked for from a sworn soldier and prince of the Church.’

The Cardinal smiled. The freedom with which Inglesant’s sarcastic humour showed itself at times, when the melancholy fit was upon him, was one of the sources of attraction which attached the young Englishman to his person.

‘Life is short,’ he said, ‘and the future very uncertain ; martyrs have died, nay, still harder fate, have lived long lives of such devotion as that which you wish me to attempt, and we see very little result. Christianity is not of much use apparently to many of the nations of the earth. Now, on my side, as I pass my life, I certainly enjoy this world, and I as certainly have cultivated my mind to sustain, as far as I can foresee the probable, the demand and strain that will be put upon it, both in the exit from this life, and in the entrance upon another. Why then should I renounce these two positive goods, and embrace a life of restless annoyance

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and discomfort, of antagonism to existing systems and order, of certain failure, disappointment, and the peevish protestation of a prophet to whom the world will not listen ?'

'There is no reason why, certainly,' said Inglesant, 'for a sane man like your Eminence. I see clearly, it must only have been madmen who in all ages have been driven into the fire and upon the sword's point in pursuit of an idea which they fancied was worth the pain, but which, as they never realized it, they could never put to the test.'

'I perceive your irony,' said the Cardinal, 'and I recognize your wit. What astonishes me is the interest you take in these old myths and dreary services. The charm of novelty must have worn itself out by this time.'

'Christ is real to many men,' said Inglesant, 'and the world seems to manifest within itself a remedial power such as may be supposed to be His.'

'I do not dispute such a power,' replied the Cardinal ; 'I only wonder at the attachment to these old myths which profess to expound it.'

'The world has now been satisfied with them for some centuries,' said Inglesant ; 'and for my own part, I cannot help thinking that, even in the blaze of a purer Mythos, some of us will look back with longing to "one of the days of the Son of man." I do not perceive either that your Eminence attempts to improve matters.'

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‘I can afford to wait,’ replied the Cardinal, with lofty indifference; ‘the myths of the world are slow to change.’

‘This one certainly,’ replied Inglesant, with a smile, ‘has been slow to change, perhaps because men found in it something that reminded them of their daily life. It speaks of suffering and of sin. The cross of Christ is composed of many other crosses—is the centre, the type, the essence of all crosses. We must *suffer* with Christ whether we *believe* in Him or not. We must suffer for the sin of others as for our own; and in this suffering we find a healing and purifying power and element. This is what gives to Christianity, in its simplest and most unlettered form, its force and life. Sin and suffering for sin; a sacrifice, itself mysterious, offered mysteriously to the Divine Nemesis or Law of Sin,—dread, undefined, unknown, yet sure and irresistible, with the iron necessity of law. This the intellectual Christ, the Platonic-Socrates, did not offer: hence his failure, and the success of the Nazarene. *Vicisti Galilæe.*’

CHAPTER XXIV

AMONG the letters of introduction to persons in Rome which Inglesant carried with him, was one from Father St. Clare to the Rector of the English College, a Jesuit. The Cardinal had invited him to remain an inmate of his family, but there were several reasons which induced Inglesant to decline the offer. He was desirous of observing the situation and habits of the great city in a more unfettered way than he would probably be able to do if attached to the household of a great man. This reason alone would probably have decided him, but it was not the only one. In proportion as his mind recovered its natural tone, and was able to throw off the depression which had so long troubled him, another source of perplexity had taken its place. Most men, in those days, with the exception of very determined Puritans, approached Rome with feelings of veneration and awe. Inglesant's training and temperament inclined him to entertain these feelings as strongly perhaps as any man of the day ; but since he had been in Italy,

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his eyes and ears had not been closed, and it had been impossible for him to resist a growing impression, scarcely perhaps amounting to conviction, that the nearer he approached the Papal capital the more wretched and worse governed did the country appear on every side. In the muttered complaints which reached his ear these evils were charged partly upon the abuses of the Papal chair itself, but principally upon the tyranny and oppression of the society of the Jesuits. Inglesant made these observations mostly in the taverns or cafés in the evenings, when those who were present, perceiving him to be a foreigner, were more disposed to be communicative than they otherwise would have been. But the Cardinal was known to associate rather with the Fathers of the Oratory than with the Jesuits; and men did not hesitate therefore to speak somewhat freely on these matters to his familiar companion. These accusations did not destroy Inglesant's faith in the Society, but they made him anxious to hear the other side, and to see, if possible from within, the working of this great and powerful organization, and to understand the motives which prompted those actions which were so much blamed, and which were apparently productive of such questionable fruits. If this were to be done, it must be done at once. He came to Rome recommended to the Jesuits' College, almost an accredited agent.

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He would be received without suspicion, and would probably be enabled to obtain an insight into much of their policy. But if at the outset he associated himself with persons and interests hostile, or at least indifferent, to those of the party to which he belonged, and which he wished to understand, this opportunity would doubtless soon be lost to him. Acting upon these considerations, he parted from the Cardinal, to whom he confided his motives, and made his way to the English College or house, which was situated in the street leading to St. Peter's and the Vatican, and not far from the Bridge and Castle of St. Angelo.

The College was a large and fair house, standing in several courts and gardens. Inglesant was received with courtesy by the rector, who said that he remembered seeing him in London, and that he had also been at his father's house in Wiltshire. He named to him several Priests who had also been there ; but so many Papists had been constantly coming and going at Westacre, during the time that Father St. Clare had resided there, that Inglesant could not recall them to mind. The rector, however, mentioned one whom he remembered, the gentleman who had given him St. Theresa's *Life*. He advised Inglesant to remain some days at the College, as the usual and natural resort of all Englishmen connected in any way with the Court and Church of Rome, promising

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him pleasant rooms. He showed him his apartment, a small but handsome guest-chamber, looking upon a garden, with a sort of oratory or closet adjoining, with an altar and crucifix. The bell rang for supper, but the rector had that meal laid for himself and his guest in his private room. The students, and those who took their meals at the common table, had but one good meal in the day, that being a most excellent one. Their supper consisted of a glass of wine and a manchet of bread.

The rector and Inglesant had much talk together, and after the latter had satisfied his host, as best he could, upon all those points—and they were many—connected with the state of affairs in England upon which he desired information, the rector began in his turn to give his guest a description of affairs in Rome, and of those things which he should see, and how best to see them.

‘I will not trouble you now,’ he said, ‘with any policy or State affairs. You will no doubt wish to spend the next few days in seeing the wonderful sights of this place, and in becoming familiar with its situation, so that you may study them more closely afterwards. A man must indeed be ill-endowed by nature who does not find in Rome delight in every branch of learning and of art. The libraries are open, and the students have access to the rarest books; in the Churches the most exquisite voices are daily

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heard, the palaces are crowded with pictures and with statues, ancient and modern. You have, besides, the stately streets and noble buildings of every age, the presence of strangers from every part of the world, villas covered with "bassi relievi," and the enjoyment of nature in enchanting gardens. To a man who loves the practices of devotion I need not mention the life-long employment among the Churches, relics, and processions. It is this last that gives the unique completeness of the Roman life within itself. To the abundance of its earthly wealth, to the delights of its intellectual gratifications, is added a feeling of unequalled security and satisfaction, kept alive, in a pious mind, by the incessant contemplation of the objects of its reverence. I do not know if you are by taste more of a scholar than of a religious, but both tastes are worthy of cultivation, nor is all spiritual learning necessarily confined to the last. There is much that is very instructive in the lessons which the silent stones and shattered monuments of the fallen cities over which we walk teach us. It has been well observed that everything that has been dug out of the ruins of ancient Rome has been found mutilated, either by the barbarians, fanaticism, or time ; and one of our poets, Janus Vitalis, seeing all the massive buildings mouldered or mouldering away, and the ever-changing Tiber only remaining the same, composed this ingenious and pleasing verse—

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*‘Disce hinc quid possit fortuna ; immota labascunt ;
Et quæ perpetuo sunt fluitura, manent.’*

You will find that the Italian humour delights much in such thoughts as these, which make the French and other nations accuse us of melancholy. The Italian has a strong fancy, yet a strong judgment, and this makes him delight in such things as please the fancy, while at the same time they are in accordance with judgment and with reason. He delights in music, medals, statues, and pictures, as things which either divert his melancholy or humour it ; and even the common people, such as shoemakers, have formed curious collections of medals of gold, silver, and brass, such as would have become the cabinet of a prince. Do you wish to begin with the Churches or with the antiquities ?

Inglesant said he wished to see the Churches first of all.

‘You will, no doubt,’ said the rector, ‘find a great satisfaction in such a choice. You will be overcome with the beauty and solemnity of these sacred places, and the sweetness of the organs and of the singing will melt your heart. At the same time, I should wish to point out to you, to whom I wish to speak without the least reserve, that you will no doubt see some things which will surprise you, nay, which may even appear to you to be, to say the least, of questionable advantage. You must understand once for all, and constantly bear in mind, that

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this city is like none other, and that many things are natural and proper here which would be strange and ill-fitted elsewhere. Rome is the visible symbol and representation of the Christian truth, and we live here in a perpetual masque or holy interlude of the life of the Saviour. As in other countries and cities, outward representations are placed before the people of the awful facts and incidents on which their salvation rests, so here this is carried still farther, as indeed was natural and almost inevitable. It was a very small step from the representation of the flagellation of Christ, to the very pillar on which He leant. Indeed, where these representations were enacted, the simple country people readily and naturally conceived them to have taken place. Hence, when you are shown the three doors of Pilate's house in which Jesus passed and repassed to and from judgment, the steps up which He walked, the rock on which He promised to build His Church, the stone on which the cock stood and crowed when Peter denied Him, part of His coat and of His blood, and several of the nails of His cross,—more, possibly, than were originally used, over which the heretics have not failed to make themselves very merry ;—when you see all these things, I say, and if you feel, as I do not say you will feel—but if you feel any hesitancy or even some repulsion, as though these miraculous things were to you matters more of doubt than worship, you will

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not fail at once to see the true nature and bearing of these things, nor to apply to them the solution which your philosophy has doubtless given already to many difficult questions of this life. These things are true to each of us according as we see them ; they are, in fact, but shadows and likenesses of the absolute truth that reveals itself to men in different ways, but always imperfectly and as in a glass. To the simple-hearted peasant that pavement upon which in his mind's eye he sees Jesus walking, is verily and indeed pressed by the Divine feet ; to him this pillar, the sight of which makes the stinging whips creep along his flesh, is the pillar to which the Lord was tied. Our people, both peasant and noble, are of the nature of children—children who are naughty one moment and sincerely penitent the next. They are now wildly dissolute, the next day prostrate before the cross ; and as such, much that is true and beautiful in their lives seems otherwise to the cold and world-taught heart. But our Lord honoured the childlike heart, and will not send away our poor peasants when they come to Him with their little offerings, even though they lay them at the feet of a Bambino doll.'

'But do you not find,' said Inglesant, 'that this devotion, which is so ephemeral, is rather given to the sensible object than to the unseen Christ ?'

'It may be so,' said the rector ; 'there is no

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good but what has its alloy ; but it is a real devotion, and it reaches after Christ. Granted that it is dark ; no doubt in the darkness it finds Him, though it cannot see His form.'

'Doubtless,' said Inglesant, who saw that the rector did not wish to dwell on this part of the subject, 'as we say in our service in England, we are the sheep of His pasture, and we are all branded with the mark which He puts upon His sheep—the innate knowledge of God in the soul. I remember hearing of a man who believed that he had a guardian spirit who awoke him every morning with the audible words, "Who gets up first to pray?" If this man was deluded, it could not have been by Satan.'

In the morning, when Inglesant awoke, he saw from his window, over the city wall, the Monte Mario, with its pine woods, and the windows of its scattered houses lighted by the rising sun. The air was soft and balmy, and he remained at the open window, letting his mind grow certain of the fact that he was in Rome. In the clear atmosphere of the Papal city there was a strange shimmer of light upon the distant hills and on the green tufts and hillocks of the waste ground beyond the walls. The warm air fanned his temples, and in the stillness of the early morning a delicious sense of a wonderful and unknown land, into the mysteries of which he was about to enter, filled his mind.

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It was indeed a strange world which lay before him, and resembled nothing so much as that to which the rector had aptly compared it the night before—a sacred interlude full of wild and fantastic sights; Churches more sublime than the dreams of fancy painted, across whose marble pavements saints and angels moved familiarly with men; pagan sepulchres and banqueting chambers, where the phantoms flickered as in Tartarus itself; vaults and Christian catacombs, where the cry of martyrs mingled with the chanting of masses sung beneath the sod, and where the torch-light flashed on passing forms of horror, quelled everywhere by the figure of the Crucified, that at every turn kept the place; midnight processions and singing, startling the darkness and scaring the doers of darkness, mortal and immortal, that lurked among the secret places, where the crimes of centuries stood like ghastly corpses at every step; and above all and through all the life of Jesus, enacted and re-enacted year after year and day by day continually, not in dumb show or memorial only, but in deed and fact before the eyes of men, as if, in that haunt of demons and possessed, in that sink of past and present crime, nothing but the eternal presence and power of Jesus could keep the fiends in check.

The rector took Inglesant over the College, and showed him the life and condition of the inmates under its most pleasing aspect. As he

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then saw it, it reminded him of a poem he had heard Mr. Crashaw read at Little Gidding, describing a religious house and condition of life, and he quoted part of it to the rector :—

‘No cruel guard of diligent cares, that keep
Crowned woes awake, as things too wise for sleep :
But reverend discipline, and religious fear,
And soft obedience, find sweet bidding here ;
Silence and sacred rest, peace and pure joys.’

When they had seen the College the rector said,—

‘We will go this morning to St. Peter’s. It is better that you should see it at once, though the first sight is nothing. Then at three o’clock we will attend vespers at the Cappella del Coro, where there is fine music every day in the presence of a cardinal ; afterwards, as Rome is very full, there will be a great confluence of carriages in the Piazza of the Farnese Palace, which is a favourite resort. There I can show you many of the great ones, whom it is well you should know by sight, and hear something of, before you are presented to them.’

As they passed out into the street of the city the rector began a disquisition on the discovery of antiquities in Rome. He advised Inglesant to study the cabinets of medals which he would meet with in the museums and palaces, as they would throw great light upon the statues and other curiosities.

‘A man takes a great deal more pleasure,’ he

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said, 'in surveying the ancient statues who compares them with medals than it is possible for him to do without some such knowledge, for the two arts illustrate each other. The coins throw a great light upon many points of ancient history, and enable us to distinguish the kings and consuls, emperors and empresses, the deities and virtues, with their ensigns and trophies, and a thousand other attributes and images not to be learnt or understood in any other way. I have a few coins myself, which I shall be glad to show you, and a few gems, among which is an Antinous cut in a carnelian which I value very highly. It represents him in the habit of a Mercury, and is the finest Intaglio I ever saw. I obtained it by accident from a peasant, who found it while digging in his vineyard.'

Inglesant was too much occupied watching the passers-by in the thronged streets to pay much attention to what he said. The crowded pavements of Rome offered to his eyes a spectacle such as he had never seen, and to his imagination a fanciful pageant such as he had never pictured even in his dreams. The splendid equipages with their metal work of massive silver, the strange variety of the clerical costumes, the fantastic dresses of the attendants and papal soldiers, the peasants and pilgrims from all countries, even the most remote, crossed his vision in an entangled maze.

As they crossed the bridge of St. Angelo, the

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rector informed him of the invaluable treasures of antique art which were supposed to lie beneath the muddy waters of the river. They passed beneath the castle, and a few moments more brought them to the piazza in front of the Church.

The Colonnade was not finished, one side of it being then in course of completion ; but in all its brilliant freshness, with the innumerable statues, white from the sculptor's hand, it had an imposing and stately effect. The great obelisk, or Guglia, as the Italians called it, had been raised to its position some seventy years before, but only one of the great fountains was complete. Crossing the square, which was full of carriages, and of priests and laymen on foot, the rector and Inglesant ascended the marble stairs which had formed part of the old Basilica, and up which Charlemagne was said to have mounted on his knees, and passing through the gigantic porch, with its enormous pillars and gilt roof, the rector pushed back the canvas-lined curtain that closed the doorway, and they entered the Church.

The masons were at work completing the marble covering of the massive square pillars of the nave ; but though the work was unfinished, it was sufficient to produce an effect of inexpressible richness and splendour. The vast extent of the pavement, prepared as for the heavenly host with inlaying of colours of polished stone, agate, serpentine, porphyry, and chalcedon ; the shining walls, veined with the richest marbles,

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and studded with gems ; the roof of the nave, carved with foliage and roses overlaid with gold ; the distant walls and chambers of imagery, dim with incense, through which shone out, scarcely veiled, the statues and tombs, the paintings and crucifixes and altars, with their glimmering lights ;—all settled down, so to speak, upon Inglesant's soul with a perception of subdued splendour, which hushed the spirit into a silent feeling which was partly rest and partly awe.

But when, having traversed the length of the nave without uttering a word, he passed from under the gilded roofs, and the spacious dome, lofty as a firmament, expanded itself above him in the sky, covered with tracery of the celestial glories and brilliant with mosaic and stars of gold ; when, opening on all sides to the wide transepts, the limitless pavement stretched away beyond the reach of sense ; when, beneath this vast work and finished effort of man's devotion, he saw the high altar, brilliant with lights, surmounted and enthroned by its panoply of clustering columns and towering cross ; when, all around him, he was conscious of the hush and calmness of worship, and felt in his inmost being the sense of vastness, of splendour, and of awe ;—he may be pardoned if, kneeling upon the polished floor, he conceived for the moment that this was the house of God, and that the gate of heaven was here.

CHAPTER XXV

‘IT is almost impossible for a man to form in his imagination,’ said the rector to Inglesant, as they left the Church, ‘such beautiful and glorious scenes as are to be met with in the Roman Churches and Chapels. The profusion of the ancient marble found within the city itself, and the many fine quarries in the neighbourhood, have made this result possible; and notwithstanding the incredible sums of money which have been already laid out in this way, the same work is still going forward in other parts of Rome; the last effort still endeavouring to out-shine those that went before it.’

Inglesant found this assertion to be true. As he entered Church after Church, during the first few days of his sojourn in Rome, he found the same marble walls, the same inlaid tombs, the same coloured pavements. In the sombre autumn afternoons this splendour was toned down and veiled, till it produced an effect which was inexpressibly noble,—a dim brilliance, a subdued and restrained glory, which accorded well

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with the enervating perfume and the strains of romantic music that stole along the aisles. In these Churches, and in the monasteries adjoining, Inglesant was introduced to many priests and ecclesiastics, among whom he might study most of the varieties of devout feeling, and of religious life in all its forms. To many of these he was not drawn by any feeling of sympathy ; many were only priests and monks in outward form, being in reality men of the world, men of pleasure, or antiquarians and artists. But, introduced to the society of Rome in the first place as a 'devoto' he became acquainted naturally with many who aspired to, and who were considered to possess, exceptional piety. Among these he was greatly attracted by report towards a man who was then beginning to attract attention in Rome, and to exert that influence over the highest and most religious natures, which, during a period of twenty years, became so overpowering as at one time to threaten to work a complete revolution in the system and policy of Rome. This was Michael de Molinos, a Spanish priest who, coming to Rome some years before, began to inculcate a method of mystical devotion which he had no doubt gathered from the followers of St. Theresa, who were regarded with great veneration in Spain, where the contemplative devotion which they taught was held in high esteem. On his first coming to Rome Molinos refused all ecclesiastical advancement,

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and declined to practise those austerities which were so much admired. He associated with men of the most powerful minds and of the most elevated thoughts, and being acknowledged at once to be a man of learning and of good sense, his influence soon became perceptible. To all who came to him for spiritual comfort and advice he insisted on the importance of mental devotion, of daily communion, and of an inward application of the soul to Jesus Christ and to His death. So attractive were his personal qualities, and so alluring his doctrine, to minds which had grown weary of the more formal ceremonies and acts of bodily penance and devotion, that thousands thronged his apartments, and 'the method of Molinos' became not only a divine message to many, but even the fashionable religion of Rome.

It spoke to men of an act of devotion, which it called the contemplative state, in which the will is so united to God and overcome by that union that it adores and loves and resigns itself up to Him, and, not exposed to the wavering of the mere fancy, nor wearied by a succession of formal acts of a dry religion, it enters into the life of God, into the heavenly places of Jesus Christ, with an indescribable and secret joy. It taught that this rapture and acquiescence in the Divine Will, while it is the highest state and privilege of devotion, is within the reach of every man, being the fruit of nothing more than

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the silent and humble adoration of God that arises out of a pure and quiet mind; and it offered to every man the prospect of this communion—a prospect to which the very novelty and vagueness gave a hitherto unknown delight—in exchange for the common methods of devotion which long use and constant repetition had caused to appear to many but as dead and lifeless forms. Those who followed this method generally laid aside the use of the rosary, the daily repeating of the breviary, together with the common devotion of the saints, and applied themselves to preserve their minds in an inward calm and quiet, that they might in silence perform simple acts of faith, and feel those inward motions and directions which they believed would follow upon such acts.

To such a doctrine as this, taught by such a man, it is not surprising that Inglesant was soon attracted, and he visited Molinos's rooms several times. On one of these occasions he met in the anteroom a gentleman he had seen more than once before, but had never spoken to. He was therefore somewhat surprised when he accosted him, and seemed desirous of some private conference. Inglesant knew that he was the Count Vespiriani, and had heard him described as of a noble and refined nature, and a hearty follower of Molinos. They left the house together, and driving to the gardens of the Borghese Palace, they walked for some time.

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The Count began by expressing his pleasure that at so early a period of his residence in Rome Inglesant had formed the acquaintance of Molinos.

‘You are perhaps,’ he said, ‘not aware of the importance of the movement, nor of the extent to which some of us are not without hope that it may ultimately reach. Few persons are aware of the numbers already devoted to it, including men of every rank in the Church and among the nobility, and of every variety of opinion and of principle. It cannot be supposed that all these persons act thus under the influence of any extraordinary elevation of piety or devotion. To what then can their conduct be ascribed? It cannot have escaped your notice, since you have been in Italy, that there is much that is rotten in the state of government, and to be deplored in the condition of the people. I do not know in what way you may have accounted for this lamentable condition of affairs in your own mind ; but among ourselves (those among us at any rate who are men of intelligence and of experience of the life of other countries, and especially Protestant ones) there is but one solution—the share that priests have in the government, not only in the Pope’s territory, but in all the other courts of Italy where they have the rule. This does not so much arise from any individual errors or misdoing as from the necessary unfitness of ecclesiastics to interfere in civil

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affairs. They have not souls large enough nor tender enough for government ; they are trained in an inflexible code of morals and of conduct from which they cannot swerve. To this code all human needs must bow. They are cut off from sympathy with their fellows on most points ; and their natural inclinations, which cannot be wholly suppressed, are driven into unworthy and mean channels ; and they acquire a narrowness of spirit and a sourness of mind, together with a bias to one side only of life, which does not agree with the principles of human society. All kinds of incidental evils arise from these sources, in stating which I do not wish to accuse those ecclesiastics of unusual moral turpitude. Among them is the fact that, having individually so short and uncertain a time for governing, they think only of the present, and of serving their own ends, or satisfying their own conceptions, regardless of the ultimate happiness or misery which must be the consequence of what they do. Whatever advances the present interests of the Church or of themselves, for no man is free altogether from selfish motives,—whatever enriches the Church or their own families, for no man can help interesting himself in those of his own house,—is preferred to all wise, great, or generous counsels. You will perhaps wonder what the mystic spiritual religion of Molinos has to do with all this, but a moment's explanation will, I think, make it very clear to you. The hold

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which the priests have upon the civil government is maintained solely by the tyranny which they exercise over the spiritual life of men. It is the opinion of Molinos that this function is misdirected, and that in the place of a tyrant there should appear a guide. He is about to publish a book called "La Guida Spirituale," which will appear with several approbations before it,—one by the general of the Franciscans, who is a Qualificator of the Inquisition, and another by a member of the Society to which you are attached, Father Martin de Esparsa, also one of the Qualificators. This book, so authorized and recommended, cannot fail not only to escape censure, but to exert a powerful influence, and will doubtless be highly esteemed. Now the importance of Molinos's doctrine lies in this, that he presses the point of frequent communion, and asserts that freedom from mortal sin is the only necessary qualification. At the same time he guards himself from the charge of innovation by the very title and the whole scope of his book, which is to insist upon the necessity of a spiritual director and guide. You will see at once what an important step is here gained ; for the doctrine being once admitted that mortal sin only is a disqualification for receiving the sacrament, and the necessity of confession before communion being not expressed, the obligation of coming always to the priest, as the minister of the sacrament of penance, before every com-

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munion, cannot long be insisted upon. Indeed, it will become a rule by which all spiritual persons who adhere to Molinos's method will conduct their penitents, that they may come to the sacrament when they find themselves out of the state of mortal sin, without going at every time to confession; and it is beginning to be observed already in Rome that those who, under the influence of this method, are becoming more strict in their lives, more retired and serious in their mental devotions, are become less zealous in their whole deportment as to the exterior parts of religion. They are not so assiduous at mass, nor in procuring masses for their friends, nor are they so frequent at confession or processions. I cannot tell you what a blessing I anticipate for mankind should this method be once allowed; what a freedom, what a force, what a reality religion would obtain! The time is ripe for it, and the world is prepared. The best men are giving their adherence; I entreat you to lend your aid. The Jesuits are wavering; they have not yet decided whether the new method will prevail or not. The least matter will turn the scale. You may think that it is of little importance which side you take, but if so, you are mistaken. You are not perhaps aware of the high estimation in which the reports and letters which have preceded you have caused you to be held at the Jesuits' College. You are supposed to have great influence with the English Catholics

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and Protestant Episcopalians, and the idea of promoting Catholic progress in England is the dearest to the mind of the Roman Ecclesiastic.'

Inglesant listened to the Count attentively, and did not immediately reply. At last he said,—

'What you have told me is of the greatest interest, and commends itself to my conscience more than you know. As to the present state and government of Italy I am not competent to speak. One of the things which I hoped to learn in Rome was the answer to some complaints which I have heard in other parts of Italy. I fear also that you may be too sanguine as to the result of such freedom as you desire. This age is witness of the state to which too much freedom has brought England, my own country, a land which, a few years ago, was the happiest and wealthiest of all countries, now utterly ruined and laid waste. The freedom which you desire, and the position of the clergy which you approve, is somewhat the same as that which existed in the Protestant Episcopal Church of England; but the influence they possessed was not sufficient to resist the innovations and wild excesses of the Sectaries. The freedom which I desire for myself I am willing to renounce when I see the evil which the possession of it works among others and in the State. What you attempt, however, is an experiment in which I am not unwilling to be interested; and I shall be very

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curious to observe the result. The main point of your method, the freedom of the blessed sacrament, is a taking piece of doctrine, for the holding of which I have always been attracted to the Episcopal Church of England. It is, as you say, a point of immense importance, upon which, in fact, the whole system of the Church depends. I have been long seeking for some solution of the mysterious difficulties of the religious life. It may be that I shall find it in your Society, which I perceive already to consist of men of the highest and most select natures, with whom, come what may, it is an honour to be allied. You may count on my adherence; and though I may seem a half-hearted follower, I shall not be found wanting when the time of action comes. I should wish to see more of Molinos.'

'I am not at all surprised,' said the Count, 'that you do not at once perceive the full force of what I have said. It requires to be an Italian, and to have grown to manhood in Italy, to estimate justly the pernicious influence of the clergy upon all ranks of society. I have travelled abroad, and when I have seen such a country as Holland, a land divided between land and sea, upon which the sun rarely shines, with a cold and stagnant air, and liable to be destroyed by inundations: when I see this country rich and flourishing, full of people, happy and contented, with every mark of plenty, and none at all of want; when I see all this, and then think of

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my own beautiful land, its long and happy summers, its rich and fruitful soil, and see it ruined and depopulated, its few inhabitants miserable and in rags, the scorn and contempt instead of the envy of the world ; when I think of what she was an age or two ago, and reflect upon the means by which such a fall, such a dispeopling, and such a poverty, has befallen a nation and a climate like this,—I dare not trust myself to speak the words which arise to my lips. Those with whom you associate will doubtless endeavour to prevent these melancholy truths from being perceived by you, but they are too evident to be concealed. Before long you will have painful experiences of their existence.'

'You say,' said Inglesant, 'that one or two ages ago Italy was much more prosperous than at present ; were not the priests as powerful then as now ?'

'I do not deny,' replied the Count, 'that there have been other causes which have tended to impoverish the country, but under a different government many of these might have been averted or at any rate mitigated. When the commerce of the country was flourishing, the power of the wealthy merchants and the trading princes was equal or superior to that of the priests, especially in the leading States. As their influence and wealth declined, the authority of the clergy increased. A wiser policy might

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have discovered other sources of wealth and of occupation for the people ; they only thought of establishing the authority of the Church, of adorning the altars, of filling the Papal coffers.'

Inglesant may have thought that he perceived a weak point in this explanation, but he made no reply, and the Count supposed he was satisfied.

A few days afterwards he had the opportunity of a long and private conversation with Molinos.

The Spaniard was a man of tall and graceful exterior, with a smile and manner which were indescribably alluring and sweet. Inglesant confided to him something of his past history, and much of his mental troubles and perplexities. He spoke of De Cressy and of the remorse which had followed his rejection of the life of self-denial which the Benedictine had offered him. Molinos's counsel was gentle and kindly.

'It was said to me long ago,' said Inglesant, 'that "there are some men born into the world with such happy dispositions that the cross for a long time seems very light, if not altogether unfelt. The strait path runs side by side with the broad and pleasant way of man's desires ; so close are they that the two cannot be discerned apart. So the man goes on, the favourite seemingly both of God and his fellows ; but let him not think that he shall always escape the common doom. God is preparing some great test for him, some great temptation, all the more terrible for

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being so long delayed. Let him beware lest his spiritual nature be enervated by so much sunshine, so that when the trial comes, he may be unable to meet it. His conscience is easier than other men's : what are sins to them are not so to him. But the trial that is prepared for him will be no common one : it will be so fitted to his condition that he cannot palter with it nor pass it by ; he must either deny his God or himself." This was said to me by one who knew me not ; but it was said with something of a prophetic instinct, and I see in these words some traces of my own fate. For a long time it seemed to me that I could serve both the world and God, that I could be a courtier in kings' houses and in the house of God, that I could follow the earthly learning and at the same time the learning that is from above. But suddenly the chasm opened beneath my feet ; two ways lay before me, and I chose the broad and easy path ; the cross was offered to me, and I drew back my hand ; the winnowing fan passed over the floor, and I was swept away with the chaff.'

'I should prefer to say,' replied the Spaniard, —and as he spoke, his expression was wonderfully compassionate and urbane, —'I should prefer to say that there are some men whom God is determined to win by love. Terrors and chastisements are fit for others, but these are the select natures, or, as you have yourself termed them, the courtiers of the household of God.

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Believe me, God does not lay traps for any, nor is He mistaken in His estimate. If He lavishes favour upon any man, it is because he knows that that man's nature will respond to love. It is the habit of kings to assemble in their houses such men as will delight them by their conversation and companionship, "*amor ac deliciæ generis humani*," whose memory is fresh and sweet ages after, when they be dead. Something like this it seems to me God is wont to do, that He may win these natures for the good of mankind and for His own delight. It is true that such privilege calls for a return; but what will ensure a return sooner than the consideration of such favour as this? You say you have been unworthy of such favour, and have forfeited it for ever. You cannot have forfeited it, for it was never deserved. It is the kingly grace of God, bestowed on whom He will. If I am not mistaken in your case, God will win you, and He will win you by determined and uninterrupted acts of love. It may be that in some other place God would have found for you other work; you have failed in attaining to that place; serve Him where you are. If you fall still lower, or imagine that you fall lower, still serve Him in the lowest room of all. Wherever you may find yourself, in Courts or pleasure-houses or gardens of delight, still serve Him, and you will bid defiance to imaginations and powers of evil, that strive to work upon a

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sensitive and excited nature, and to urge it to despair. Many of these thoughts which we look upon as temptations of God are but the accidents of our bodily temperaments. How can you, nursed in Courts, delicately reared and bred, trained in pleasure, your ear and eye and sense habituated to music and soft sounds, to colour and to beauty of form, your brain developed by intellectual effort and made sensitive to the slightest touch—how can religious questions bear the same aspect to you as to a man brought up in want of the necessities of life, hardened by toil and exposure, unenlightened by learning and the arts, unconscious of the existence even of what is agony or delight to you? Yet God is equally with both of these; in His different ways He will lead both of them, would they but follow, through that maze of accident and casualty in which they are involved, and out of the tumult of which coil they complain to the Deity of what is truly the result of their own temperaments, ancestry, and the besetments of life. I tell you this because I have no fear that it will exalt you, but to keep you from unduly depreciating yourself, and from that terrible blasphemy that represents God as laying snares for men in the guise of pretended kindness. God is with all, with the coarse and dull as with the refined and pure, but He draws them by different means,—those by terror, these by love.'

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Inglesant said little in answer to these words, but they made a deep impression upon him. They lifted a weight from his spirits, and enabled him henceforward to take some of the old pleasure in the light of heaven and the occurrences of life. He saw much of Molinos, and had long conferences with him upon the solution of the greatest of all problems, that of granting religious freedom, and at the same time maintaining religious truth. Molinos thought that his system solved this problem, and although Inglesant was not altogether convinced of this, yet he associated himself heartily, if not wholly, with the Quietists, as Molinos's followers were called, insomuch that he received some friendly cautions from the Jesuit College not to commit himself too far.

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It must not be supposed, however, that he was altogether absorbed in such thoughts or such pursuits. To him, as to all the other inhabitants of Rome, each in his own degree and station, the twofold aspect of existence in the strange Papal city claimed his alternate regard, and divided his life and his intellect. The society of Rome, at one moment devout, the next philosophic, the next antiquarian, artistic, pleasure-seeking, imparted to all its members some tincture of its Protean character. The existence of all was coloured by the many-sided prism through which the light of every day's

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experience was seen. Inglesant's acquaintance with the Cardinal introduced him at once to all the different coteries, and procured him the advantage of a companion who exerted a strong and cultivated mind to exhibit each subject in its completest and most fascinating aspect. Accompanied by the Cardinal, and with one or other of the literati of Rome, each in his turn a master of the peculiar study to which the day was devoted, Inglesant wandered day after day through all the wonderful city, through the palaces, ruins, museums, and galleries. He stood among the throng of statues, that strange maze of antique life, which some enchanter's wand seems suddenly to have frozen into marble in the midst of its intricate dance, yet so frozen as to retain, by some mysterious art, the warm and breathing life. He saw the men of the old buried centuries, of the magic and romantic existence when the world was young. The beautiful gods with their white wands; the grave senators and stately kings; the fauns and satyrs that dwelt in the untrodden woods; the pastoral flute-players, whose airs yet linger within the peasant's reeds; the slaves and craftsmen of old Rome, with all their postures, dress, and bearing, as they walked those inlaid pavements, buried deep beneath the soil, whose mosaic figures every now and then are opened to the faded life of to-day. Nor less entrancing were those quaint fancies upon the classic tombs, which showed in what manner

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the old pagan looked out into the spacious ether and confronted death,—a child playing with a comic masque, bacchanals, and wreaths of flowers, hunting parties, and battles, images of life, of feasting and desire ; and finally, the inverted torch, the fleeting seasons ended, and the actor's part laid down.

Still existing as a background to this phantom life was the stage on which it had walked ; the ruined splendour of Rome, in its setting of blue sky and green foliage, of ivy and creeping plants, of laurels and ilex, enfolded in a soft ethereal radiance that created everywhere a garden of romance.

‘ Nothing delights and entertains me so much in this country,’ said Inglesant one day to a gentleman with whom he was walking, ‘ as the contrasts which present themselves on every hand, the peasant's hut built in the ruins of a palace, the most exquisite carving supporting its tottering roof, cattle drinking out of an Emperor's tomb, a theatre built in a mausoleum, and pantomime airs and the “plaudite” heard amid the awful silence of the grave ; here a Christ, ghastly, naked, on a cross ; there a charming god, a tender harmony of form and life ; triumphal arches sunk in the ruins not of their own only, but of successive ages, monuments far more of decay and death than of glory or fame ; Corinthian columns canopied with briers, ivy, and wild vine, the delicate acanthus wreaths stained

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by noisome weeds. The thoughts that arise from the sight of these contrasts are pleasing though melancholy, such ideas, sentiments, and feelings as arise in the mind and in the heart at the foot of antique columns, before triumphal arches, in the depths of ruined tombs, and on mossy banks of fountains; but there are other contrasts which bring no such soothing thoughts with them; nothing but what may almost be called despair; profusion of magnificence and wealth side by side with the utmost wretchedness; Christ's altar blazing with jewels and marble, misery indescribable around; luxury, and enjoyment, and fine clothes, almost hustled by rags, and sores, and filth. Amid the lesson of past ages, written on every ruined column and shattered wall, what a distance still exists between the poor and the rich! Should the poor man wish to overpass it, he is driven back at once into his original wretchedness, or condemned more mercifully to death, while every ruined column and obelisk cries aloud, "Let everything that creeps console itself, for everything that is elevated falls."

'We Romans,' said the gentleman, 'preserve our ruins as beggars keep open their sores. They are preserved not always from taste; nor from a respect of antiquity, but sometimes from mere avarice, for they attract from every corner of the world that crowd of strangers whose curiosity has long furnished a maintenance to

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three-fourths of Italy. But you were speaking of the charming gods of the ancients. We are not inferior to them. Have you seen the Apollo of Bernini pursuing Daphne, in the Borghese Palace? His hair waves in the wind, you hear the entreaties of the god.'

'Yes, I have seen it,' said Inglesant; 'it is another of those wonderful contrasts with which Rome abounds. We are Catholic and Pagan at the same time.'

'It is true,' said the other; 'nevertheless, in the centre of the blood-stained Coliseo stands a crucifix. The Galilean has triumphed.'

Inglesant stopped. They were standing before the Apollo in the Belvedere gardens. Inglesant took from beneath his vest a crucifix in ivory, exquisitely carved, and held it beside the statue of the god. The one the noblest product of buoyant life, the proudest perfection of harmonious form, purified from all the dross of humanity, the head worthy of the god of day and of the lyre, of healing and of help, who bore in his day the selfsame name that the other bore, 'the great physician'; the other, worn and emaciated, helpless, dying, apparently without power, forgotten by the world. 'Has the Galilean triumphed? Do you prefer the Christ?' he said.

The gentleman smiled. 'The benign god,' he said, 'has doubtless many votaries, even now.'

It is probable that the life of Rome was

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working its effect upon Inglesant himself. Under its influence, and that of the Cardinal, his tone of thought became considerably modified. In a strange and unexpected way, in the midst of so much religion, his attention was diverted from the religious side of life, and his views of what was philosophically important underwent considerable change. He read Lucretius less, and Terence and Aristophanes more. Human life, as he saw it existing around him, became more interesting to him than theories and opinions. Life in all its forms, the Cardinal assured him, was the only study worthy of man; and though Inglesant saw that such a general assertion only encouraged the study of human thought, yet it seemed to him that it directed him to a truth which he had hitherto perhaps overlooked, and taught him to despise and condemn nothing in the common path of men in which he walked. If this were true, the more carefully he studied this common life, and the more narrowly he watched it, the more worthy it would appear of regard; the dull and narrow streets, the crowded dwellings, the base and vulgar life, the poverty and distress of the poorer classes, would assume an interest unknown to him before.

‘This life and interest,’ the Cardinal would say, ‘finds its best exponent in the old pantomime and burlesque music of Italy. The real, everyday, commonplace, human life, which

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originates absolutely among the people themselves, speaks in their own music and street airs ; but when these are touched by a master's hand, it becomes revealed to us in its essence, refined and idealized, with all its human features, which, from their very familiarity, escape our recognition as we walk the streets. In the peculiarity of this music, its graceful delicacy and lively frolic and grotesqueness, I think I find the most perfect presentment, to the ear and heart, of human life, especially as the slightest variation of time or setting reveals in the most lively of these airs depths of pathos and melodious sorrow, completing thus the analogy of life, beneath the gayest phases of which lie unnoticed the saddest realities.'

'I have often felt,' said Inglesant, 'that old dance music has an inexpressible pathos ; as I listen to it I seem to be present at long-past festivities, whose very haunts are swept away and forgotten ; at evenings in the distant past, looked forward to as all important, upon whose short and fleeting hours the hopes and enjoyments of a lifetime were staked, now lost in an undistinguished oblivion and dust of death. The young and the beautiful who danced to these quaint measures, in a year or two had passed away, and other forms equally graceful took their place. Fancies and figures that live in sound, and pass before the eyes only when evoked by such melodies, float down the

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shadowy way and pass into the future, where other gay and brilliant hours await the young, to be followed as heretofore by pale and disappointed hopes and sad realities, and the grave.'

'What do you mean,' said the Cardinal, 'by figures that live in sound?'

'It seems to me,' said Inglesant, 'that the explanation of the power of music upon the mind is, that many things are elements which are not reckoned so, and that sound is one of them. As the air and fire are said to be peopled by fairy inhabitants, as the spiritual man lives in the element of faith, so I believe that there are creatures which live in sound. Every lovely fancy, every moment of delight, every thought and thrill of pleasure which music calls forth, or which, already existing, is beautified and hallowed by music, does not die. Such as these become fairy existences, spiritual creatures, shadowy but real, and of an inexpressibly delicate grace and beauty, which live in melody, and float and throng before the sense whenever the harmony that gave and maintains their life exists again in sound. They are children of the earth, and yet above it; they recall the human needs and hopes from which they sprang. They have shadowy sex and rank, and diversity of bearing, as of the different actors' parts that fill the stage of life. Poverty and want are there, but, as in an allegory or morality, purified and released from suffering. The pleasures and delights of

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past ages thus live again in sound, the sorrows and disappointments of other days and of other men mingle with our own, and soften and subdue our hearts. Apollo and Orpheus tamed the savage beasts ; music will soften our rugged nature, and kindle in us a love of our kind and a tolerance of the petty failings and the shortcomings of men.'

It was not only music that fostered and encouraged in Rome an easy tolerant philosophy. No society could be more adapted than that of the Papal city to such an end. A people whose physical wants were few and easily supplied (a single meal in such a climate, and that easily procured, sufficing for the day) ; a city full of strangers, festivals, and shows ; a conscience absolutely at rest ; a community entirely set apart from politics, absolutely at one with its government by habit, by interest, and by religion ; —constituted a unique state and mental atmosphere, in which such philosophy naturally flourished. The early hours of the day were spent in such business as was necessary for all classes to engage in, and were followed by the dinner of fruit, vegetables, fish, and a little meat. From dinner all went to sleep, which lasted till six o'clock in the evening. Then came an hour's trifling over the toilette, all business was at an end, and all the shops were shut. Till three o'clock in the morning the hours were devoted to enjoyment. Men, women, and children

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repaired to the public walks, to the Corso and squares, to conversation in coteries, to assemblies in arcaded and lighted gardens, to collations in taverns. Even the gravest and most serious gave themselves up to relaxation and amusement till the next day. Every evening was a festival ; every variety of character and conversation enlivened these delicious hours, these soft and starry nights.

Nothing pleased Inglesant's fancy so much, or soothed his senses so completely, as this second dawn of the day and rising to pleasure in the cool evening. Soothed and calmed by sleep, the irritated nerves were lulled into that delicious sense for which we have no name, but which we compare to flowing water, and to the moistening of a parched and dusty drought. All thoughts of trouble and of business were banished by the intervening hours of forgetfulness, from which the mind, half-aroused and fresh from dreamland, awoke to find itself in a world as strange and fantastic as the land of sleep which it had left ; a land bathed in sunset light, overarched by rainbows, saluted by cool zephyrs, soothed by soft strains of music, delighted and amused by gay festivals, peopled by varied crowds of happy folk, many-coloured in dress, in green walks sparkling with fairy lamps, and seated at *al fresco* suppers, before cosy taverns famous for delicious wines, where the gossip of Europe, upon which Rome looked out as from a Belvedere, intrigue,

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and the promotions of the morning, were discussed.

Inglesant had taken lodgings in an antique villa on the Aventine, surrounded by an uncultivated garden and by vineyards. The house was partly deserted and partly occupied by a family of priests, and he slept here when he was not at the Cardinal's palace, or with other of his friends. The place was quiet and remote from the throng and noise of Rome ; in the gardens were fountains in the cool shade ; frescoes and paintings had been left on the walls and in the rooms by the owner of the villa ; the tinkling of convent bells sounded from the slopes of the hills through the laurels and ilex and across the vines ; every now and then the chanting of the priests might be heard from a small Chapel at the back of the house.

Inglesant awoke from his mid-day sleep one evening to the splash of the fountain, and the scent of the fresh-turned earth in the vineyard, and found his servant arranging his room for his toilette. He was to sup that evening at the Cardinal's with some of the Fathers of the Oratory, and he dressed, as was usual with him even in his most distracted moods, with scrupulous care. A sedan was waiting for him, and he set out for the Cardinal's palace.

It was a brilliant evening ; upon the hill-sides the dark trees stood out against the golden sky, the domes and pinnacles of the Churches shone

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in the evening light. In the quiet lanes, in the neighbourhood of the Aventine, the perfume of odoriferous trees was wafted over lofty garden walls ; quiet figures flitted to and fro, a distant hum of noisy streets scarcely reached the ear, mingled with the never-ceasing bells. That morning, before he went to sleep, Inglesant had been reading *The Birds* of Aristophanes, with a voluminous commentary by some old scholar, who had brought together a mass of various learning upon the subject of grotesque apologue, fable, and the fanciful representation of the facts and follies of human life under the characters of animals and of inanimate objects. A vast number of examples of curious pantomime and other stage characters were given, and the idea preserved throughout that, by such impersonations, the voices of man's existence were able to speak with clearness and pathos, and were more sure of being listened to than when they assumed the guise of a teacher or divine. Beneath a grotesque and unexpected form they conceal a gravity more sober than seriousness itself, as irony is more sincere than the solemnity which it parodies. Truth drops her stilted gait, and becomes natural and real, in the midst of ludicrous and familiar events. The broad types of life's players into which the race is divided, especially the meanest,—thieves, beggars, outcasts,—with whom life is a reality stripped of outward show, will carry a moral and a teaching

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more aptly than the privileged and affected classes. Mixed with these are animals and familiar objects of household life, to which everyday use has given a character of their own. These, not in the literal repulsiveness or dulness of their monotonous existence, but abstracted, as the types or emblems of the ideas associated with each one—not a literal beggar, in his dirt and loathsomeness, but poverty, freedom, helplessness, and amusing knavery, personified in the part of a beggar—not a mere article of household use in its inanimate stupidity, but every idea and association connected with the use of such articles by generations of men and women ; —these and such as these, enlivened by the sparkle of genius, set forth in gay and exquisite music, and by brilliant repartee and witty dialogue, certainly cannot be far behind the very foremost delineation of human life.

Educated in the Court of King Charles to admire Shakespeare and the Elizabethan stage, Inglesant was better able to understand these things than the Italians were, suggestive as the Italian life itself was of such reflections. The taste for music and scenery had driven dialogue and character from the stage. Magnificent operas, performed by exquisite singers, and accompanied by mechanical effects of stupendous extent, were almost the only scenic performances fashionable in Italy ; but this was of less consequence where every street was a stage, and every

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festival an elaborate play. The Italians were pantomimic and dramatic in the highest degree without perceiving it themselves. The man who delights in regarding this life as a stage cannot attach an overwhelming importance to any incident; he observes life as a spectator, and does not engage in it as an actor; but the Italian was too impetuous to do this—he took too violent an interest in the events themselves.

The narrow streets through which Inglesant's chair passed terminated at last in a wide square. It was full of confused figures, presenting to the eye a dazzling movement of form and colour, of which last, owing to the evening light, the prevailing tint was blue. A brilliant belt of sunset radiance, like molten gold along the distant horizon, threw up the white houses into strong relief. Dark cypress trees rose against the glare of the yellow sky, tinged with blue from the fathomless azure above. The white spray of fountains flashed high over the heads of the people in the four corners of the square, and long lance-like gleams of light shot from behind the cypresses and the white houses, refracting a thousand colours in the flashing water. A murmur of gay talk filled the air, and a constant change of varied form perplexed the eye.

Inglesant alighted from his chair, and, directing his servants to proceed at once to the Cardinal's, crossed the square on foot. Following so closely on his previous dreamy thoughts,

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he was intensely interested and touched by this living pantomime. Human life had never before seemed to him so worthy of regard, whether looked at as a whole, inspiring noble and serious reflections, or viewed in detail, when each separate atom appears pitiful and often ludicrous. The infinite distance between these two poles, between the aspirations and the exhortations of conscience, which have to do with humanity as a whole, and the actual circumstances and capacities of the individual, with which satirists and humourists have ever made free to jest,—this contrast, running through every individual life as well as through the mass of existence, seemed to him to be the true field of humour, and the real science of those ‘Humanities’ which the schools pedantically professed to teach.

Nothing moved in the motley crowd before him but what illustrated this science,—the monk, the lover, the soldier, the improvisatore, the matron, the young girl; here the childish hand brandishing its toy, there the artisan, and the shop-girl, and the maid-servant, seeking such enjoyment as their confined life afforded; the young boyish companions with interlaced arms, the benignant priest, every now and then the stately carriage slowly passing by to its place on the Corso, or to the palace or garden to which its inmates were bound.

Wandering amid this brilliant phantasia of life, Inglesant’s heart smote him for the luxuri-

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ous sense of pleasure which he found himself taking in the present movement and aspect of things. Doubtless this human philosophy, if we may so call it, into which he was drifting, has a tendency, at least, very different from much of the teaching which is the same in every school of religious thought. Love of mankind is inculcated as a sense of duty by every such school ; but by this is certainly not intended love of and acquiescence in mankind as it is. This study of human life, however, this love of human existence, is unconnected with any desire for the improvement either of the individual or of the race. It is man as he is, not man as he might be, or as he should be, which is a delightful subject of contemplation to this tolerant philosophy which human frailty finds so attractive. Man's failings, his self-inflicted miseries, his humours, the effect of his very crimes and vices, if not even those vices themselves, form a chief part in the changing drama upon which the student's eyes are so eagerly set, and without these it would lose its interest and attraction. A world of perfect beings would be to such a man of all things the most stale and unprofitable. Humour and pathos, the grotesque contrast between a man's aspirations and his actual condition, his dreams and his mean realities, would be altogether wanting in such a world. Indignation, sorrow, satire, doubt, and restlessness, allegory, the very

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soul and vital salt of life, would be wanting in such a world. But if a man does not desire a perfect world, what part can he have in the Christian warfare? It is true that an intimate study of a world of sin and of misfortune throws up the sinless character of the Saviour into strong relief; but the student accepts this Saviour's character and mission as part of the phenomena of existence, not as an irreconcilable crusade and battle-cry against the powers of the world on every hand. The study of life is indeed equally possible to both schools; but the pleased acquiescence in life as it is, with all its follies and fantastic pleasures, is surely incompatible with following the footsteps of the Divine Ascetic who trod the wine-press of the wrath of God. With all their errors, they who rejected the world and all its allurements, and taught the narrow life of painful self-denial, must be more nearly right than this.

Nevertheless, even before this last thought was completely formed in his mind, the sight of the moving people, and of the streets of the wonderful city opening out on every side, full of palaces and glittering shops and stalls, and crowded with life and gaiety, turned his halting choice back again in the opposite direction, and he thought something like this :—

‘ How useless and even pitiful is the continued complaint of moralists and divines, to whom none lend an ear, whilst they endeavour, age

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after age, to check youth and pleasure, and turn the current of life and nature backward on its course. For how many ages in this old Rome, as in every other city, since Terence gossiped of the city life, has this frail faulty humanity for a few hours sunned itself on warm afternoons in sheltered walks and streets, and comforted itself into life and pleasure, amid all its cares and toils and sins. Out of this shifting phantasmagoria comes the sound of music, always pathetic and sometimes gay : amid the roofs and belfries peers the foliage of the public walks, the stage upon which, in every city, life may be studied and taken to heart ; not far from these walks is, in every city, the mimic stage, the glass in which, in every age and climate, human life has seen itself reflected, and has delighted, beyond all other pleasures, in pitying its own sorrows, in learning its own story, in watching its own fantastic developments, in foreshadowing its own fate, in smiling sadly for an hour over the still more fleeting representation of its own fleeting joys. For ever, without any change, the stream flows on, spite of moralist and divine, the same as when Phaedria and Thais loved each other in old Rome. We look back on these countless ages of city life, cooped in narrow streets and alleys and paved walks, breathing itself in fountained courts and shaded arcades, where youth and manhood and old age have sought their daily sustenance not only of

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bread but of happiness, and have with difficulty and toil enough found the one and caught fleeting glimpses of the other, between the dark thunder clouds, and under the weird, wintry sky of many a life. Within such a little space how much life is crowded, what high hopes, how much pain! From those high windows behind the flower-pots young girls have looked out upon life, which their instincts told them was made for pleasure, but which year after year convinced them was, somehow or other, given over to pain. How can we read this endless story of humanity with any thought of blame? How can we watch this restless quivering human life, this ceaseless effort of a finite creature to attain to those things which are agreeable to its created nature, alike in all countries, under all climates and skies, and whatever change of garb or semblance the long course of years may bring, with any other thought than that of tolerance and pity—tolerance of every sort of city existence, pity for every kind of toil and evil, year after year repeated, in every one of earth's cities, full of human life and handicraft, and thought and love and pleasure, as in the streets of that old Jerusalem over which the Saviour wept?'

* * * * *

The conversation that evening at the Cardinal's villa turned upon the antiquities of Rome.

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The chief delight of the Fathers of the Oratory was in music, but the Cardinal preferred conversation, especially upon Pagan literature and art. He was an enthusiast upon every subject connected with the Greeks,—art, poetry, philosophy, religion; upon all these he founded theories and deductions which showed not only an intimate acquaintance with Greek literature, but also a deep familiarity with the human heart. A lively imagination and eloquent and polished utterance enabled him to extract from the baldest and most obscure myths and fragments of antiquity much that was fascinating, and, being founded on a true insight into human nature, convincing also.

Inglesant especially sympathized with and understood the tone of thought and the line of reasoning with which the Cardinal regarded Pagan antiquity; and this appreciation pleased the Cardinal, and caused him to address much of his conversation directly to him.

The villa was full of objects by which thought and conversation were attracted to such channels. The garden was entered by a portico or door-case adorned with ancient statues, the volto or roof of which was painted with classic subjects, and the lofty doors themselves were covered with similar ones in relief. The walls of the house, towards the garden, were cased with bas-reliefs,—‘antique incrustations of history’ the Cardinal called them,—represent-

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ing the Rape of Europa, of Leda, and other similar scenes. These antique stones and carvings were fitted into the walls between the rich pilasters and cornicing which adorned the front of the villa, and the whole was crossed with tendrils of citron and other flowering shrubs, trained with the utmost art and nicety, so as to soften and ornament without concealing the sculpture. The gardens were traversed by high hedges of myrtle, lemon, orange, and juniper, interspersed with mulberry trees and oleanders, and were planted with wide beds of brilliant flowers, according to the season ; the effect was luscious beyond description—but, as Inglesant alighted from his sedan, there crossed his senses a strange incongruous scent, as of dry decay, and he could think only of the words ‘Thou hast brought me into the Dust of Death.’ The rooms were ornamented in the same taste, and the chimney of the one in which the supper was laid was enriched with sculpture of wonderful grace and delicacy.

One of the Fathers of the Oratory asked Inglesant whether he had seen the Venus of the Medicean palace, and what he thought of it compared with the Venus of the Farnese ; and when he had replied, the other turned to the Cardinal and inquired whether, in his opinion, the Greeks had any higher meaning or thought in these beautiful delineations of human form than mere admiration and pleasure.

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‘The higher minds among them assuredly,’ said the Cardinal; ‘but in another and more important sense every one of them, even the most unlettered peasant who gazed upon the work, and the most worldly artist buried in the mere outward conceptions of his art, were consciously or unconsciously following, and even worshipping, a divinity and a truth than which nothing can be higher or more universal. For the truth was too powerful for them, and so universal that they could not escape. Human life, in all the phases of its beauty and its deformity, is so instinct with the divine nature, that, in merely following its variety, you are learning the highest lessons, and teaching them to others.’

‘What may you understand by being instinct with the divine nature?’ said the Priest, not unnaturally.

‘I mean that general consensus and aggregate of truth in which human nature and all that is related to it is contained. That divine idea, indeed, in which all the facts of human life and experience are drawn together, and exalted to their utmost perfection and refinement, and are seen and felt to form a whole of surpassing beauty and nobleness, in which the divine image and plastic power in man is clearly discerned and intellectually received and appropriated.’

The Priest did not seem altogether to understand this, and remained silent.

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‘But,’ said Inglesant, ‘much of this pursuit of the beautiful must have been associated, in the ideas of the majority of the people, with thoughts and actions the most unlovely and undesirable according to the intellectual reason, however delightful to the senses.’

‘Even in these orgies,’ replied the Cardinal, ‘in the most profligate and wild excesses of licence, I see traces of this all-pervading truth ; for the renouncing of all bound and limit is in itself a truth, when any particular good, though only sensual, is freed and perfected. This is, no doubt, what the higher natures saw, and it was this that reconciled them to the licence of the people and of the unilluminated. In all these aberrations they saw ever fresh varieties and forms of that truth which, when it was intellectually conceived, it was their greatest enjoyment to contemplate, and which, no doubt, formed the material of the instructions which the initiated into the mysteries received. It is impossible that this could be otherwise, for there can be no philosophy if there be no human life from which to derive it. The intellectual existence and discourses of Socrates cannot be understood, except when viewed in connection with the sensual and common existence and carnal wisdom of Aristophanes, any more than the death of the one can be understood without we also understand the popular thought and feeling delineated to us by the other. And why

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should we be so ungrateful as to turn round on this "beast within the man," if you so choose to call it,—the human body and human delight to which we owe not only our own existence and all that makes life desirable, but also that very loftiness and refinement of soul, that elevated and sublime philosophy, which could not exist but for the contrast and antithesis which popular life presents? Surely it is more philosophical to take in the whole of life, in every possible form, than to shut yourself up in one doctrine, which, while you fondly dream you have created it, and that it is capable of self-existence, is dependent for its very being on that human life from which you have fled, and which you despise. This is the whole secret of the Pagan doctrine, and the key to those profound views of life which were evolved in their religion. This is the worship of Priapus, of human life, in which nothing comes amiss or is to be staggered at, however voluptuous or sensual, for all things are but varied manifestations of life; of life, ruddy, delicious, full of fruits, basking in sunshine and plenty, dyed with the juice of grapes; of life in valleys cooled by snowy peaks, amid vineyards and shady fountains, among which, however, "*Sæpe Faunorum voces exauditæ, sæpe visæ formæ Deorum.*"

'This, Signore Inglesant,' said the Priest, passing the wine across the table, with a smile, 'is somewhat even beyond the teaching of your friends of the Society of the Gesu; and would

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make their doctrine even, excellently as it already suits that purpose, still more propitious towards the frailty of men.'

Inglesant filled his glass, and drank it off before he replied. The wine was of the finest growth of the delicious Alban vineyards ; and as the nectar coursed through his veins, a luxurious sense of acquiescence stole over him. The warm air, laden with perfume from the shaded windows, lulled his sense ; a stray sunbeam lighted the piles of fruit and the deeply embossed gold of the service on the table before him, and the mellow paintings and decorated ceiling of the room. As he slowly drank his wine the memory of Serenus de Cressy, and of his doctrine of human life, rose before his mind, and his eyes were fixed upon the deep-coloured wine before him, as though he saw there, as in a magic goblet, the opposing powers that divide the world. It seemed to him that he had renounced his right to join in the conflict, and that he must remain as ever a mere spectator of the result ; nevertheless he said,—

'Your doctrine is delightful to the philosopher and to the man of culture, who has his nature under the curb, and his glance firmly fixed upon the goal ; but to the vulgar it is death ; and indeed it was death until the voice of another God was heard, and the form of another God was seen, not in vineyards and rosy bowers, but in deserts and stony places, in dens and caves of the earth, and in prisons and on crosses of wood.'

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‘It is treason to the idea of cultured life,’ said the Cardinal, ‘to evoke such gloomy images. My theory is at least free from such faults of taste.’

‘Do not fear me,’ said Inglesant ; ‘I have no right to preach such a lofty religion. An asceticism I never practised it would ill become me to advocate.’

‘You spoke of the death of Socrates,’ said the Priest ; ‘does this event fall within the all-embracing tolerance of your theory ?’

‘The death of Socrates,’ said the Cardinal, ‘appears to have been necessary to preserve the framework of ordinary everyday society from falling to pieces. At any rate men of good judgment in that day thought so, and they must have known best. You must remember that it was Socrates that was put to death, not Plato, and we must not judge by what the latter has left us of what the former taught. The doctrine of Socrates was purely negative, and undermined the principle of belief not only in the Gods but in everything else. His dialectic was excellent and noble, his purpose pure and exalted, the clearing of men’s minds of false impressions ; but to the common fabric of society his method was destruction. So he was put to death, unjustly of course, and contrary to the highest law, but according to the lower law of expediency, justly ; for society must preserve itself even at the expense of its noblest thinkers. But,’ added

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the Cardinal with a smile, 'we have only to look a little way for a parallel. It is not, however, a perfect one; for while the Athenians condemned Socrates to a death painless and dignified, the moderns have burnt Servetus, whose doctrine contained nothing dangerous to society, but turned on a mere point of the schools, at the stake.'

'Why do they not burn you, Cardinal?' said one of the Oratorians, who had not yet spoken, a very intimate friend of the master of the house.

'They do not know whom to begin with in Rome,' he replied; 'if they once commenced to burn, the holocaust would be enormous before the sacrifice was complete.'

'I would they would burn Donna Olympia,' said the same Priest; 'is it true that she has returned?'

'Have patience,' said the Cardinal; 'from what I hear you will not have long to wait.'

'I am glad you believe in purgatory,' said the Priest who had spoken first. 'I did not know that your Eminence was so orthodox.'

'You mistake. I do not look so far. I am satisfied with the purgatory of this life. I merely meant that I fear we shall not long have his Holiness among us.'

'The moderns have burnt others besides Servetus,' said one of the guests—'Vaninus, for instance.'

'I did not instance Vaninus,' said the Cardinal, 'because his punishment was more justifiable,

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and nearer to that of Socrates. Vaninus taught atheism, which is dangerous to society, and he courted his death. I suppose, Mr. Inglesant, that your bishops would burn Mr. Hobbes if they dared.'

'I know little of the Anglican bishops, Eminence,' replied Inglesant; 'but from that little I should imagine that it is not impossible.'

'What does Mr. Hobbes teach?' said one of the party.

The Cardinal looked at Inglesant, who shook his head.

'What he teaches would require more skill than I possess to explain. What they would say that they burnt him for would be for teaching atheism and the universality of matter. I fancy that it is at least doubtful whether even Vaninus meant to deny the existence of God. I have been told that he was merely an enthusiastic naturalist, who could see nothing but nature, which was his god. But as for Mr. Hobbes's opinions, he seems to me to have proclaimed a third authority in addition to the two which already claimed the allegiance of the world. We had first the authority of a Church, then of a book, now Mr. Hobbes asserts the authority of reason; and the supporters of the book, even more fiercely than those of the Church, raise a clamour against him. His doctrines are very insidiously and cautiously expressed, and it proves the acuteness of the Anglican divines that they

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have detected, under the plausible reasoning of Mr. Hobbes, the basis of a logical argument which would, if unconfuted, destroy the authority of Holy Scripture.'

The Cardinal looked at Inglesant curiously, as though uncertain whether he was speaking in good faith or not, but the subject did not seem to possess great interest to the company at table, and the conversation took another turn.

END OF VOL. II

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